

State news



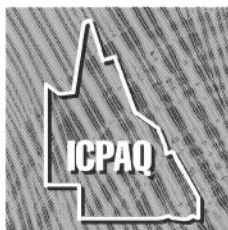
Australian Capital Territory

Another year has almost passed and, for our small but active association, it has been a successful one. As the AICA moves towards a more professional image nationally, we in the ACT have endeavoured to do the same. We have held office practice seminars for general practitioners, plus dentists and their assistants, and have had a number of education sessions at our local meetings. Some of our members will be certified by the NSW branches of the Infection Control Association, the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Dental Association, to accredit dental and doctors' surgeries in the ACT for infection control.

I am writing this at the end of the day, and cannot help but think (like most of my colleagues): **"Wotta a day it's been!"** Elaine (Graham) and I started with a cuppa at 0700 hours and planned our day. I began by having alkaline utensil-washing liquid accidentally tipped all over me as I attempted to solve a problem in the formula room. Then I took myself off to shower and dropped my page in the water. When Elaine and I met over lunch 'on the run', her morning had been equally eventful. A simple teaching session using Glogerm unearthed many problems with hands not being regularly cleaned. In the middle of this, Elaine had two outside calls, one wanting to know how to get 'golden staph' out of her crocheted shawl and the other concerning an uncovered sandpit at a local preschool. We then reviewed the draft Occupational Health and Safety Code of Practice for the sexual services industry in the ACT and couldn't help but chuckle at the section related to leather equipment such as whips, which should be washed in warm, soapy water and dried in the sun. We had visions of the Hills Hoists in the valleys of suburban Canberra going round and round with the whips pegged on! These events, on top of the usual rounds, surveillance and consults, are the type of situations that happen to us all that and make the job so challenging!

As this will be the last edition of the journal for 1997, members of the ICA ACT send greetings to all our friends and colleagues and wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and a successful New Year.

Dianne Dreimanis, Sub-editor



Queensland

Annual state conference

The 1997 ICPAQ conference was held at the Sheraton Brisbane Hotel from 19-21 September 1997. This year, for the first time, ICPAQ joined with the Queensland Wound Care Association for a joint state conference. The ensuing meeting was very successful, with a program of papers that reflected both the common and distinct interests of the two groups. Over 250 delegates and 36 trade exhibitors attended, and the Sheraton provided a venue that was both elegant and informal. The theme of the conference was 'Vision to Action'. Delegates were warmly welcomed by Dolly Olesen, president of ICPAQ, who, drawing upon this theme, gave a strong and inspiring address, challenging the audience to create a vision and advance the mission of ICPAQ.

Keynote speaker Dr George Eliopoulos – Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and consultant in infectious diseases at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Boston, USA – presented two papers, one on VRE and the other on Gram-negative bacteria.

There followed a very interesting and stimulating mix of presentations (approximately 25 in all) plus two challenging contests. The topics embraced a range of issues in infection control and wound care, with papers from nursing, medicine and the allied health professions. The first of the contests was a spirited challenge on the topics of surgical wound surveillance and standard precautions, with the second a debate

on the location of health care in the private sector. In both these forums, the presenters drew upon humour, science, policy and opinion to bring thought-provoking insights to the topics presented.

Congratulation to Dolly Olesen, Nancy Magazinovic and the committee, for a most successful and collegial conference.

ICPAQ executive

The conference also provided a forum for the ICPAQ annual general meeting and executive elections. Elected office-bearers are as follows:

- President – **Dolly Olesen**
- Vice-president – **Carol Cameron**
- Secretary – **Alanna Geary**
- Membership secretary – **David Gunderson**
- Treasurer – **Ruth Hood**
- Assistant treasurer – **Laila Chalustowski**
- State sub-editor – **Glenn Gardner**
- Public relations – **Clare Guilfoyle**.

Congratulations to these new office-bearers; I am sure all ICPAQ members wish you well for the coming year

Glenn Gardner, Sub-editor



South Australia

New committee

The annual general meeting of ICASA was held in July 1997, with the new office-bearers as follows.

- President – **Rosemary Carapetas**,
ICP, Hutt Street Hospital, Adelaide;
- Vice-president – **Mary McDonald**,
ICP, Women's and Children's Hospital;
- Acting secretary – **Marilyn Leaver**,
infection control consultant;
- Treasurer – **Beverley Gregg**,
Red Cross Blood Service;
- Immediate past president – **Jacqui MacLean**,
ICP, Royal Adelaide Hospital;
- Education officer – **Jude Bail**,
CN, SA Dental Service;

- Journal Sub-editor – **Irene Wilkinson**,
infection control scientist,
Royal Adelaide Hospital and IMVS;
- Committee members –
 - **Michael Wishart**, ICP, Ashford Hospital;
 - **Michael Eades**, ICP, Whyalla Hospital;
 - **Christine Mudge**, industry representative
(Kimberley-Clark).

Many thanks to members of the outgoing committee, for their enthusiasm and dedication during the last 2 years. As immediate past president, Jacqui MacLean has agreed to continue on the committee, thereby ensuring continuity. In addition, two new committee positions have been created, those of education officer and journal sub-editor; these were ratified at the AGM. ICASA also farewells two long-term members who have given valuable service to the association over many years: Elizabeth Agnew and Carolyn Walker. We wish them well in the future and thank them for their considerable contributions.

National conference

During the next 2 years we will be very busy preparing for the national conference, to be held in Adelaide in the year 2000. A committee has been formed, with representation from both public and private city and country hospitals, as well as industry. The conference is already shaping up to have broad appeal for all infection control practitioners.

State seminar

The annual seminar held in November was a great success, with a variety of new and practical topics being covered. Particular highlights were a look at forensic pathology (complete with gruesome visuals!), an entertaining presentation on the interpretation of pathology reports, and a very useful session on writing effective reports. This meeting was followed by our Christmas dinner, at historic Ayers House, and a good time was had by all!

ASM scientific conference

This year, the Australian Society for Microbiology held its annual scientific meeting, 'Festival of Microbes', in Adelaide and, for the first time, the organisers had arranged a day of presentations of particular interest to infection control practitioners. Those who were able to attend heard informative presentations by three key overseas speakers:

- Professor Brian Duerdon, Director of the PHLS, UK, spoke on the system of nosocomial infection surveillance operating in that country, at both central and regional levels;

- Associate Professor Ellen Jo Baron, from the UCLA Medical Centre, USA, discussed the role of the microbiologist in infection control, and
- Dr George Eliopoulos, also from the USA, gave an excellent overview of the problems associated with the emergence of vancomycin resistance in enterococci.

Other interesting presentations included the control of MRSA in Western Australia, the use of molecular typing techniques in the investigation of cross-infection problems within a neonatal intensive care unit, and an especially interesting paper on the use of hand-held computers for collecting data in the ward, the latter given by Dr David Looke from Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane.

Video on handwashing

The staff development unit of the Royal Adelaide Hospital, in conjunction with the infection control unit, has produced an entertaining video. Designed to raise awareness of the importance of handwashing and aseptic technique in everyday clinical practice, it aims to promote discussion and change behaviour rather than teach these practices.

The video can be borrowed for review prior to purchase by contacting Jacqui McLean on telephone (08) 8222 4611.

Irene Wilkinson, Sub-editor



Tasmania

Tasmania has had a busy last few months, and many milestones were achieved during this time, including the state seminar, state newsletter and becoming incorporated, all of which, if one says it quickly, doesn't sound very much but you all know how much work these things entail, especially if membership is low.

New members

We would like to welcome back our old colleague Karen Mace, a (young) foundation member of TICA who recently returned from overseas, having worked in Ecuador for several years. New members Petrana Stokell, Anne Ninness, Patricia Hilton and Deborah Austen have dramatically enhanced our membership in the past few months.

Absent friends

Many of our achievements lately lie at the door of our dear friend Cynthia Bryce, currently enjoying the benefits of her long service by taking an overseas break with her husband David. Before she left, Cynthia edited the inaugural edition of our first state newsletter, which has been a very great success indeed.

Shasta Tonks and the education committee put together a stunning seminar for us on October 10 of this year, with the support of the most helpful group of product representatives we have ever had the pleasure of dealing with. We received sponsorship to bring Paul Marshall over from Sutherland Hospital, so he could give us more information on his research using Triclosan to decrease MRSA colonisation. We recommend you all invite him to your state seminars/ workshops as his contribution was invaluable! The rest of our speakers could be described as home-grown: we looked at the demographics of our customers and designed a seminar to 'put them in the picture' with respect to standards, programs and general knowledge items. Under 'Standards' we looked at standard precautions, safe practice and the environment; for 'Programs' we examined staff health, waste minimisation and management, and under 'General knowledge' we looked at hepatitis C, TB, herpes, VRE and MRSA. The serious threat of antibiotic resistance, and the importance of having a structured infection control program in place to await the inevitable VRE and other curses to which it is merely the forerunner, were emphasised throughout the day. Our eminent speakers included Louise Clippingdale, Mary Bates, Lyn Fish and Jenny Tuffin (members of TICA), plus Dr Keith Ott, Dr Hugh Mestitz, Dr Alistair McGregor and our special guests Paul Marshall and Carinda Rue.

Jenny Tuffin and Shasta Tonks, Sub-editor



Victoria

Annual general meeting

The annual general meeting was held on 15 October 1997 (after the deadline for this report to be submitted for publication), with a postal ballot conducted for all positions on the VICNA executive. A meeting of the new executive was subsequently held on 21 October 1997.

Retirements from the committee included president Bronwyn Holbeche and past president Janine Malcolm. Their expertise has been greatly appreciated and will be missed.

Original article

Congratulations to Philip Russo and others on the publication of an original article in that most prestigious of journals, *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* (Vol. 18 No. 8, August 1997). The article, entitled 'Hospital outbreak of Norwalk-like virus', relates to events 12 months prior to publication and represents a significant effort on the part of those involved. Several important aspects of outbreak prevention and control emerged (see page 579), including prompt action to cohort staff and residents/patients in the outbreak area and immediate furloughing of staff with signs and symptoms of gastroenteritis.

Philip, a VICNA member, is an employee of the Alfred Healthcare Group in Melbourne. He and his wife are also celebrating the recent arrival of their third child.

The blue book

All members should by now have received this publication from Human Services Victoria. The latest edition, it is available at <http://hna.vi.gov.au/phb/> on the Internet and is published by the infectious diseases unit, Public Health Division, Department of Human Services Victoria.

Ross Peck, Sub-editor



Western
Australia

New executive members

When the annual general meeting of ICWA was held in October 1997, four executive positions were due for nomination. However, only two were filled by new members. Therefore, two new office-bearers are welcomed to the ICWA executive: I take up the position of newsletter editor and journal sub-editor and Rosie Lee has become the state conference convenor. Terri Orrell continues as vice-president and Gabby Robathan was appointed secretary. Gabby has also accepted the role of caretaker editor of *Australian Infection Control*.

Membership survey

At the ICWA AGM in 1996 it was agreed to survey members in 1997 and identify their preferences for ICWA meeting format and times. A questionnaire was therefore distributed to members, with a 21 per cent response rate, the overall response suggesting that members preferred the existing times, dates and format for ICWA general meetings. There were some suggestions for future directions, including association activities in country areas, a broader range of health-care settings and raising the profile of infection control in health-care facilities and the general community. Many respondents expressed appreciation for the work of the association and its executive members.

Country seminars

In October Madeleine McPherson, Gabby Robathan, Terri Orrell and Barbara Elliott, four members of ICWA, flew to Albany for the day. There they presented an infection control seminar for 30 delegates at the Albany Regional Hospital. A further, similar seminar was held in Kalgoorlie in November.

Robyn Taverner, Sub-editor

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AICA Life Membership Awards

*At the AICA AGM in Melbourne in May 1997,
six Life Membership Awards were presented to the following members.*

Tasmania: *Cynthia Bryce*

Cynthia has represented TICA, AICA and her colleagues with great integrity and energy during her 20-year career in infection control. She was the first infection control nurse (sepsis sister!) appointed in Tasmania, to the Royal Hobart Hospital in 1977, and undertook an infection control course at the then Lincoln Institute in 1978. Further, Cynthia was the founding president of TICA and held the AICA presidency in 1993, at which time she was also national conference convenor. Cynthia represented AICA at the Creutzfeldt Jacob international seminar.

ACT: *Elaine Graham*

Elaine, who has worked in infection control for 14 years, was a member of the inaugural committee which established the AICA in 1985 and was also convenor of the inaugural meeting for ICA ACT in 1986. She held the position of president of ICA ACT for 6 years – from 1986, has been a member of the ICA national executive for 9 years and was convenor of the first AICA national conference in 1987. Elaine was also a member of the steering committee for the 9th AICA conference, held the position of sub-editor of the national journal, has represented the AICA on the NHMRC expert panel, Therapeutic Goods Administration Committee and two Standards Australia committees and has had three articles published, in the MJA and AICA journals.



Cynthia Bryce



Elaine Graham



Mary McCrorie



Madeleine McPherson

Victoria: *Mary McCrorie*

Mary, a founding member of the Victorian Infection Control Nurses Association and its first president, has and continues to have a commitment to infection control in Australia.

Western Australia: *Madeleine McPherson*

Madeleine has been a member of ICAWA for 17 years and in that time has served as an executive member of both ICAWA and the AICA, in the positions of secretary and president respectively. Highly regarded and well-respected by all who know her, Madeleine has had a significant impact on the promotion of infection control at state, national and international levels and developed the first infection control course in WA, at Fremantle Hospital in 1984. That course has provided the foundation for many infection control nurses, both within the state and overseas.

New South Wales: *Valda Mentjox*

Valda has been a member of ICA NSW continuously since 1986 and in that time has held a number of executive positions at both regional and state level. She has contributed to Australian infection control in a unique manner, consistently maintaining a respect for clinicians at the 'coalface' and championing the infection control cause in NSW. Her apparently untiring commitment – which is enviable and something to be respected – has been demonstrated

more recently by her willingness to act as the coordinator and financial contact for the distribution of the AICA Standards.

Queensland: Mary Mott

One of the founding members of ICPAQ, Mary's clinical experience spans a period of many years. Indeed, throughout her professional career she has maintained her credentials through ongoing education. Mary first worked at the Repatriation General Hospital in Brisbane, where she established her reputation as a leader in infection control. She was subsequently employed at the Holy Spirit Hospital for 10 years before choosing to become a private infection control con-

sultant. These days, with her private practice thriving, Mary's dedication to the development of infection control has not waned. She has represented ICPAQ on the AICA executive on several occasions, and her enthusiastic participation on this committee has been described as both professional and committed. Members of ICPAQ are proud to honour Mary and recognise her ongoing and valuable contribution.

On behalf of the AICA executive, I congratulate each recipient of this prestigious award, which has been justifiably conferred upon them.

Gabby Robathan, editor

Diary of events

March 1998

Australian Wound Management Association
The second Australian

Wound Management Association conference:
'Wound management towards 2000 –
a blossoming paradigm'

18-21 March

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Queensland

Contact:

Intermedia Convention and Event Management Pty Ltd

PO Box 1280, Milton, Queensland 4064

Tel: (07) 3369 0477 Fax: (07) 3369 1512

May 1998

Association for Practitioners in Infection Control
and Epidemiology Inc.

25th Annual Educational and International Conference

10-14 May

San Diego, California USA

Contact:

APIC '98 Committee

1016 Sixteenth Street NW, Sixth Floor

Washington DC 20036-5703, USA

Tel: +202 296 2742 Fax: +202 296 5654

E-mail: apicinfo@apic.org

Web site: <http://www.apic.org/>

Australian Infection Control Association
National Conference

18-19 May

Hyatt Regency Perth

Western Australia

Contact:

Congress West Pty Ltd

PO Box 1248, West Perth WA 6872

Tel: (08) 9322 6906 Fax: (08) 9322 6662

E-mail: conwes@congresswest.com.au

Australian Confederation of Paediatric Nurses
The Fifth International Nurses Conference

19-22 May

Wrest Point Convention Centre

Hobart, Tasmania

Contact:

Mures Convention Management

Victoria Dock, Hobart, Tasmania 7000

Tel: (03) 6234 1424 Fax: (03) 6234 4464

Australian Confederation of Operating Room Nurses
Eighth National Conference

20-23 May

Burswood Convention Centre

Perth, Western Australia

Contact:

Jacqui Smith, Convenor

Tel: (08) 9527 2777

Conference Secretariat:

Trish Zanotto at Congress West Pty Ltd

PO Box 1248, West Perth WA 6872

Tel: (08) 9322 6906 Fax: (08) 9322 6662

E-mail: conwes@congresswest.com.au

June 1998

Australasian Association for Quality in Health Care
Ninth national conference of the

Australasian Association for Quality in Health Care:
'Evidence or intuition?'

19-20 June

Nikko Hotel, Darling Harbour

Sydney New South Wales

Contact:

AAQHC Conference Organisers

PO Box 72, Moonah, Tasmania 7009

Tel: 0414 560 712

Website: <http://www.hcn.net.au/aaqhc>