



Public Health Association  
AUSTRALIA

## PHAA Oral Health SIG "TIMES" No 13 - August 2010

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A warm welcome is extended to new OHSIG members and a hearty thank you again to continuing members. At the end of July 2010 our SIG had 91 members, up from 75 last year which is very encouraging.

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

#### **PHAA's "JOIN NOW" membership drive**

PHAA members form a pretty close-knit community of engaged, caring and passionate Australians determined to improve health and reduce social justice and health inequities across Australia and internationally. It's not surprising therefore, that last year the federal Labor government renewed commonwealth financial support for the PHAA and in exchange contracted it to provide and promote opportunities for public health research, advocacy and workforce networking and development. As a consequence, the PHAA Board moved four months ago to significantly reduce PHAA 2010/11 membership fees by around 30-40%. At the same time it initiated a national "JOIN NOW" membership drive to promote the benefits of the PHAA and raise membership numbers from around 1400 to at least 1800. Success will bring considerably more expertise, ideas and energy to the PHAA. Needless to say, additional members are also needed to rebalance the budget so that all current members are being encouraged to renew their memberships and all Branches and SIGs have been encouraged to actively recruit. Current PHAA membership now stands at around 1650 but that includes many members who have still to renew for 2010/2011. Please rejoin - and stay with the OHSIG too.

#### **OHSIG Advocacy and 2009/2010 Annual Report**

Behind the scenes senior members of the OHSIG has been quite busy. Our OHSIG Annual Report ([click here](#)) provides some of the detail of our advocacy work. The PHAA through the activities of the OHSIG is a member of the newly reformed National Oral Health Alliance (NOHA) which must continue to lobby in Canberra for major oral health reforms. The OHSIG will endeavour to keep NOHA on task.



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### **PHAA Annual Conference in Adelaide from Sept 26-29**

The Conference is almost here. We have 5 oral health presentations on Tuesday, 28 September.

- 12.00 - 12.30. Prevention of dental caries in remote Indigenous pre-school children - Kaye Roberts-Thomson
- Plus there will be four presentations from 4-5pm:
- Dental service provision and change in oral health – David Brennan
- Parents’ experiences of a health counselling program to prevent dental caries in children – Aaron Cashmore
- Relative change in clinical oral health outcomes – capital city vs. non-capital-city Australians – Judith Stewart.
- Reorienting a public paediatric oral health service towards prevention– Aaron Cashmore

### **Oral Health SIG workshop on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September from 1-4pm**

OHSIG members are encouraged to attend and participate in the **Oral Health SIG workshop on Sunday from 1-4pm. “Australia’s Essential Oral Health Reform- Getting it done”**. How can the PHAA strengthen its position as an important player in the national push for absolutely essential oral health care reform? Come along and hear the latest information on the state of Australia’s oral health and then participate in a busy workshop discussion aimed at:

- developing the best strategies for effective advocacy and change;
- considering how the PHAA might use the Conference to promote oral health care reform;
- honing the PHAA's Oral Health Policy to reflect these strategies; and
- considering a greater role for the Oral Health SIG.

Professor John Spencer from ARCPOH will get us started with a short presentation on the problems that need to be addressed: then we can work together on formulating solutions.

There’s no charge to attend the workshop. Anyone can come. Workshop attendees don’t have to be registered for the Conference proper. Do let us know if you’re coming though. Just click on ‘conference workshops’ in the box on the left. The Oral Health workshop will be at 180 Flinders St. The building is a secure building on the weekends so people need to know that they will need to assemble outside at 1 pm to be let in.



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### **PHAA Oral Health Policy update**

At last year's conference the OHSIG moved some amendments to the Oral Health Policy in support of the oral health recommendations in the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission's final report including 'Denticare'. Since then nothing much has happened federally but we have decided to review the policy again to update data and strategy. The Oral Health Policy can be found by going to your member page on the PHAA website and looking at 2010 POLICY FORUMS on the Forums page. You can post your suggested amendments up until the 20th. Please take a look at it and contribute your thoughts.

### **OHSIG AGM and election of State and Territory Reps and a national Convenor**

Within 6 weeks of the Conference we have to hold our OHSIG AGM and elect State & Territory Board Representatives and a SIG convenor. Traditionally there isn't much of a turnover in reps from year to year and here's hoping that our current reps will either choose to stay on or work with their local members to find a replacement. Nomination forms will be emailed out to all SIG members in a couple of weeks' time along with the notice of the AGM which will be held by teleconference.

Recently Dr Andrea de Silva-Sanigorski, the Director of the newly formed Australian Population Health Improvement Research Strategy in Oral Health "a flagship initiative of Dental Health Services Victoria" approached me and offered her organisation's support to the OHSIG. I discussed Andrea's offer with S & T reps and as a result, Andrea and I are proposing to nominate as co-convenors in the coming year. Andrea's interest in research should complement my interest in advocacy and together we are planning to bring members more news, ideas and activities in the coming year.

### **Oral health messages for the Australian public**

Dr Alexis Zander, an OHSIG member working part-time with ARCPOH has emailed out to participants the final draft of the findings of a national consensus conference organized by ARCPOH in Adelaide from November 30 – December 1, 2009. Many of us OHSIG members attended. The messages should prove very helpful in promoting oral health providing they gain general endorsement and wide dissemination. Perhaps there could be a role therein for the OHSIG in due course.



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As ever, an invitation to please contact me at any time with any ideas or matter you'd like to raise.



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