



Public Health Association of Australia (WA Branch)
WA PHAA NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the PHAA (WA) newsletter.



Message from the President – Mike Daube

The end of 2006 is a good time to reflect on where PHAA should be going during 2007, both in WA and nationally.

We have an organisation with a tremendous record of achievement and influence. We have a membership base that is rich in wisdom and expertise; our new committee is a very welcome blend of experienced public health professionals and younger members; and the organisation nationally is developing a new impetus and looking at new ways of working.

Australians have close to the best life expectancy in the world - apart from Aboriginal people, for whom the life expectancy gap has barely changed. But there can never be any room for complacency in public health: the targets are all there for us, from dealing with the challenges of this affluent society to maintaining the emphasis on remedying disadvantage that is at the core of so much of our work.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the work and success of the PHAA in Western Australia during the past year. We were delighted to see such a good turnout at the AGM, where Police Commissioner Karl O'Callaghan delivered the McNulty Oration and spoke engagingly about the importance of prevention and the need for cooperation between health and law enforcement interests. It was also pleasing that he and Dr. Jim McNulty, for so many years the leader of public health in WA, were able to present our annual awards. At the national level, WA was also prominent on the PHAA awards front. The national PHAA Sydney Sax Medal, the Association's highest distinction, was awarded to Professor D'Arcy Holman, Foundation Professor of Public Health at UWA and a former WA Branch President.

We are now looking forward to an exciting year for public health and PHAA in 2007. We will continue with our work in professional development, seminars, member support, research development, information and advocacy, as well as looking to encourage new members from both current public health professionals and students. We are also now in the planning stages for the first WA State Public Health Conference - "Public Health in the 21st Century" - to be held at the Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle on November 1st and 2nd, 2007. This will be an important and exciting conference, and I urge you to put the dates in your diaries, register as soon as possible, and encourage as many of your colleagues as possible to participate.

People in public health should need no persuading of the importance of prevention and public health. Nationally, prevention attracts just 1.7% of recurrent health expenditure. We can and

should do better than that, especially when there is already so much evidence to support public health action, and there is still great and inexcusable disadvantage in our community. PHAA will continue to press for more action and better resources for public health programs, policies and research. We look forward to working with our members in all these areas, and would be especially keen to hear from you about anything you would like us to do, or any ways in which you would like to contribute.

Professor Mike Daube
President

WA Committee - Some New Faces

The 2007 PHAA (WA) committee has some new faces including Rani Param, Ann Blunden and Fiona Smith! Each newsletter we will be profiling one or two of these new members. This edition, we give a warm welcome to Ann Blunden and Rani Param.

About Ann

I have worked in the field of health promotion for the past 12 years. I am currently employed as Coordinator of Health Promotion with the Child and Adolescent Community Health Division (formerly known as the North Metropolitan Population Health Unit). I initially trained as a Dietitian and spent my first few working years in Katanning as a community dietitian. I have since completed a Master of Public Health and worked at the Cancer Foundation in the role of Skin Cancer Prevention Project Officer and for a Division of General Practice. My areas of interest include community engagement, community development and work in the early years to promote child development. I am excited about contributing a practitioner's perspective to the work of PHAA (WA) Committee.

About Rani

Rani is currently undertaking postgraduate studies in public health at Curtin University and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research. She has 15 years in experience in Commonwealth public sector agencies, 10 of those in health and Aboriginal health. Since early 2005 Rani has been in research, at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, UWA and the School of Paediatrics and Child Health and Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health. Rani's interests are Aboriginal child health and development, and community engagement in research.

WA Branch AGM Review

The PHAA– WA Committee's AGM was held on Wednesday 2nd November 2006, at Grace Vaughan House in Shenton Park. The President – Mike Daube gave a brief Report for the year 2005/6, and the new committee was elected. Committee members include Melissa Stoneham, Peter Howat, Jane Freemantle, Michael Jackson, Rani Param, Ann Blunden, Mike Daube, Terri Pikora, Phillippa Farrell, Linda Burke and Fiona Smith. Mike Daube was appointed unopposed to the position of President. Over 100 people gathered for this meeting.

The PHAA (WA) Branch awarded a number of awards at this year's AGM including:

Student Awards presented by Dr Karl O'Callaghan (WA Commissioner of Police) to: Dr. Lisa Wood and Gemma Crawford and the Community Awards presented by Dr. Jim McNulty to: Dr Deborah Lehmann and Maurice Swanson.

Dr. Karl O'Callaghan delivered the McNulty Oration. Dr O'Callaghan began his speech by taking us back to the land of Hobbits, Elves, Men and Dwarves from the Lord of the Rings all working together to achieve their goal.

He spoke of his concern for the youth within our community and issues such as mental health and late night trading for Liquor outlets. He concluded his speech by returning back to the Lord of the Rings analogy and stated how we as Health Professionals, Educators, Police and the community also need to cooperate and share information to achieve success in improving the health and social problems within our community.

His speech was well received and people who attended the meeting were keen to ask him questions.



Over 100 people attended the 2006 PHAA (WA) AGM



Dr Karl O'Callaghan delivered a fascinating McNulty Oration

WA Advocacy Priorities

In the last newsletter, we advised members of a long list of advocacy priorities to be addressed over the next 12 months. The process for identifying issues to date has included input from all Board Members and an invitation to 11 public health leaders asking them for thoughts on which issues they would like to see the Federal and State Governments fund into the future. The PHAA (WA) Committee has now established a workable number of advocacy issues for the next twelve months. Each issue has an advocacy plan and these are available by contacting Mike Daube at M.Daube@curtin.edu.au.

The priority advocacy issues for the next twelve months are:

- The new Public Health Act implications (includes Health Impact Assessment)
- Obesity and overweight
- Supporting public health research and public health spending
- Land Use Planning and its impact on public health
- Health Inequalities

State Conference – Esplanade Hotel Fremantle

The PHAA (WA) Branch has committed to planning and running a State based public health conference in 2007! This exciting event will be held at the Esplanade Hotel in beautiful Fremantle from Wednesday 31 October until Friday 2 November 2007. The theme of the conference is “Public Health in the 21st Century – People, Places and Policies”. The conference will have an underlying aim of promoting the up and coming public health professionals who will be needed to ensure a sustainable and effective profession into the future. A range of local, national and international speakers will feature in the program including Dr Pekka Puska (DG Public Health -Finland); Dr Amaya Gillespie (Child Health and Violence Program, UNICEF – Geneva); Professor Fiona Stanley; Dr Andrew Gilman (Sustainable Development and Health expert – Canada). A call for papers will be sent to all members in the near future. Please feel free to forward this call for papers on to colleagues. For more information about this conference please contact the convenor, Melissa Stoneham on melissagiv@git.com.au.



State of the Australian Environment Report 2006

A report on the state of the Australian environment in 2006 was launched by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage on 6 December 2006. As we all know the state of Australia’s environment is extremely relevant to us as Australians but also in terms of its impact on the rest of the world. This relates to all aspects of life including health.

The report highlighted some areas where progress has been made during the last five to ten years and others where there is still much work to be done. On the positive side expenditure on the environment has increased and governments and communities are working well together on this issue. An agenda to consider water reform nationally has been put in place, as has a mechanism for recognising heritage places of outstanding value to Australia. Better efforts are also being made to improve the marine environment. The ozone levels in the atmosphere are gradually improving although this cannot be accurately measured at this stage. The reduction in land clearing has also had a positive impact on greenhouse emissions.

On the less positive side it is recognized that further resources need to be directed to local governments and to the new regional natural resource management bodies in order for them to be able to deliver improvements. There is a danger with increased migration of people to coastal areas that there will be a negative impact on the natural and cultural values and characteristics of these environments. Our own Bunker Bay and Smith’s Beach areas in the South West are examples that immediately come to mind.

There is also an urgency to consider better ways of reducing and dealing with all aspects of waste reduction. This includes reducing the amount of waste we generate as well as developing better methods of recycling including methods for wastewater and biological waste. There has been some progress in moving towards more environmental sympathetic urban design but there is a long way to go. Unfortunately biodiversity, particularly in relation to our flora and fauna, will still continue to decline in the short term and it will take time for the effects of new initiatives to be seen. Regrettably also at this point of time we still have little information about many aspects of our heritage including knowledge and management of Indigenous culture. The loss of Indigenous languages is one obvious concern. Difficulties in managing and sustaining our environment are

underpinned by our inadequate understanding of the contributors to climate change and what are the optimal adaptive processes. More needs to be done to ensure that responses from governments are positively synergistic and not working against each other.

The overview of the report did not specifically focus on the impact on health of many of the issues. However as Public Health professionals we are aware of the inextricable link between the environment and health. One could give numerous examples of related health issues but some that come to mind immediately are asthma, skin cancer, mental health and cancer treatments. Perhaps the best might be the impact of the loss of their culture on the health of Indigenous Australians. As members of the Public Health Association of Australia we need to be very mindful and proactive about all these issues individually, in our communities and in our work and advocacy roles. In terms of the latter “land use planning and its impact on public health” is currently one of the priority issues for advocacy for our PHAA branch.

Upcoming professional development opportunities and conferences

PHAA (WA) State Conference

Public Health in the 21st Century – People, Places and Policies

Date 31 Oct – 2 Nov 2007
Venue Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle
Contact details melissagiv@git.com.au

Kindling the Flame: Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Date 21 – 23 February 2007
Venue The Hyatt Regency Hostel, Perth
Contact details EventEdge International Management Group Ph: (08) 9389 1488
Email info@eventedge.com.au
Web www.cliffordbeersfoundation.co.uk/perth.htm

9th National Rural Health Conference - Standing up for Rural Health Learning from the Past Action and for the Future.

Date 7- 10 March 2007
Venue Albury, New South Wales
Contact Details Fiona Patterson, National Rural Health Alliance(02) 6285 4660
Email: conference@ruralhealth.org.au
Web: <http://9thnrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/?IntContId=38>

Heart Foundation's 2007 Active Living Congress - Building capacity for physical activity in WA

Date 21- 23 March 2007
Venue Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle
Contact details Kym Chambers, Ph: (08) 9382 5955
Email Kym.Chambers@heartfoundation.com.au
Web <http://www.heartfoundation.com.au/index.cfm?page=1221>

HIA 2007 – South East Asian and Oceanic Regional Health Impact Assessment Conference

Date 7-9 November 2007
Venue UNSW Sydney
Contact details www.hia2207.com.

Australian Health Promotion Association 17th National Conference

Grass Roots to Global Action: Health Promotion in Challenging Environments

Date 1 - 4 May 2007
Venue Adelaide South Australia
Contact Details SAPMEA Conventions Ph: (08) 8274 6059

Email ahpa2007@sapmea.asn.au
 Web <http://www.sapmea.asn.au/conventions/ahpa2007/index.html>

Canada 2007: The 19th IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education - Health Promotion Comes of Age: Science, Policy & Practice for the 21st Century.

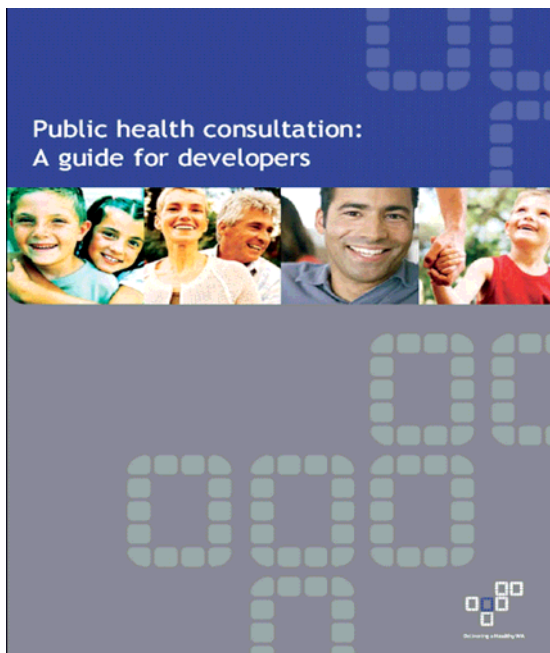
Date 10-15 June 2007
 Venue Vancouver, Canada
 Email vancouver2007@iuhpeconference.org
 Web <http://iuhpeconference.org/en/index.htm>

New Publication by the Department of Health WA

The Department of Health regards community consultation as an important component of activities undertaken during the planning stages for new development. It believes the community should be given opportunities to participate in decisions that have the potential to affect their lives and encourages proponents to demonstrate that they are working effectively with communities.

The *Public Health Consultation: A Guide for Developers* document provides a framework to for use by proponents when engaging with communities. It is important that proponents and communities alike are aware of issues that may be perceived as risks and should be considered during the early planning stages of developments.

This Guide provides advice on the range of public health issues that may be of relevance to communities to consider as well as information related to the engagement of stakeholder groups who could be included in these consultation processes. The guide is intended to be a broad framework rather than a step-by-step process for community engagement and consultation. The framework has been developed to focus on a range of determinants of public health within the consultation process.



Copies can be obtained by writing to: Cherine Glasson, Environmental Health Directorate, PO Box 8172, Perth Business Centre WA 6849 or downloaded from the web at <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/envirohealth/home>

VIOLET RIBBON DAY

Recent research has revealed that over 3.8 million Australians experience bladder control problems. Half of these people keep their problems secret and never seek help.

Violet Ribbon Day, on April 26 2007, aims to raise awareness of bladder health issues in the community and empower people to seek help. Each year Violet Ribbon Day gets bigger and better and in the process is decreasing the taboo surrounding bladder health issues.

Many people accept incontinence as “a fact of life” or “a part of ageing” however it is not something that should be put up with and should not be considered normal at any age. In fact, just by making simple lifestyle changes 70% of individuals can be greatly improved and often cured.

Please wear a Violet Ribbon to help raise awareness of bladder health issues in the community. Everyone needs a healthy bladder!

For further information on how you can support Violet Ribbon Day please contact the Continence Advisory Service of WA on (08) 9386 9777 or 1800 814 925 (country callers only) or at eburgess@continencewa.org.au.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION?

Do you have a contribution for the PHAA (WA) newsletter? Please forward to Melissa Stoneham at melissagiv@git.com.au

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



