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CEO's Report – From Kate Carnell

Welcome to 2007. This year will be yet another exciting and challenging one for our Network. The year will no doubt bring with it more opportunities for us to all effectively continue to promote primary health care on a local, state and federal level.

The Department of Health and Ageing's recent announcement to re-fund the Network until 2010-11 is most certainly a very good start to the new year. Having funding confidence until 2011 really gives us a unique opportunity to plan for an exciting future

The Federal election will provide the Network with excellent opportunities to ensure that all current and potential Federal Members of Parliament know about the great work that Divisions do in their electorates. I hope you have made appointments to see your local member and other major candidates. Make sure you capitalise on potential funding commitments for local projects in this pre election year. Any potential projects that you put forward must be local, well researched and costed. If you would like any help, AGPN is happy to provide support.

Since the launch of the Network's new Clearing House, we have had a very positive response. I am confident it will soon be an essential resource library we will all rely on to improve the efficiency of running Divisions. Hopefully this resource will ensure we don't "reinvent the wheel" and utilize all the great work Divisions are doing. This will require you adding all the resources that you have developed to the clearing house. In the coming days, the AGPN Health Calendar will be added to the site. The calendar has significant national health days and important dates. I'd invite you to view this and contact us with further information you believe suitable for the Network. The calendar will be a working document that will be updated as new information is received.

AGPN has a number of goals this year including leading the development of a long-term strategic plan for the network; the continued implementation of our communication strategy; and the maximising of opportunities that COAG funding presents to the network. Improving information systems across the Network will also be a priority as will the development of the Primary Health Care Partnership.

I look forward to working with you all to achieve our individual and Network objectives and continue to deliver local health solutions through general practice. I have no doubt that 2007 will see a united network collaborating and growing stronger.

AGPN Board Members

Chair: Dr Tony Hobbs
Chair, Finance and Audit Sub-Committee: Dr Michael Taylor
Chair, IM Committee: Dr Chris Pearce
Chair, Rural Sub-Committee: Dr Ken Connolly
Chair, Governance Sub-Committee: Dr Emil Djakic
Chair, Forum Steering Committee: Dr Hilary Fine
AGPN CEO: Kate Carnell
AGPN Deputy CEO: Liesel Wett
Dr Karen Flegg • Dr Emil Djakic • Dr Karen Stringer • Mr Russell McGowan

Acknowledging Department of Health and Ageing's contribution to projects, programs and publications.

It is also timely to remind divisions it is a contractual requirement to acknowledge the Department's contribution and support in publications and on promotional material that have been produced with government money.

Words such as "produced with the support of the Dept. of Health and Ageing" should be added to publications etc.

I raise this because AGPN forgot to add this to the Communication and Advocacy Strategy that we distributed at the Forum. This has been remedied on the copy of this document that is on our web site.

Kate

Media Snapshot

The Christmas period proved a very quiet time for AGPN in terms of media coverage. We expect things to start picking up soon as normal media programming recommences.

Media Coverage (Mainstream)

26/12/06- ABC AM- Kate Carnell **\$25-million anti-smoking campaign**

Media releases

Funding for Divisions Network secure - 02 January 2007

Today's announcement by Health Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott of future funding for the Divisions of General Practice to 2010-11 has been welcomed by AGPN.

Handy communication tip

If you don't know your local media yet, a good way to strike up conversation with your local editors, journalist or radio producers is to introduce your self and ask if they'd be interested in receiving your media releases. It's highly unlikely they'll say no and as a result will then have your details as a contact on local health issues.

Good news from around the Network

The Top End Division had some success with the Network's template media release on immunisation. Adding an excellent local NT angle on immunisation rates saw the story on page 7 of the *Northern Territory News*. TEDGP Chair Dr Peter Beaumont said

"We are aware that most children in Darwin are immunised but don't let your child be the one to put others in danger because you haven't had them done".

The Bendigo Advertiser ran a story on the enormous success of the Bendigo and District Division of General Practice's program helping overseas trained doctors qualify as GP's. The good news story saw Chair Dr Ray Moore quoted as saying,

"I have worked in different medical cultures and making the adjustment is a challenge,"

"But the efforts of the group in Bendigo was inspirational".

"It shows that given the right support and encouragement overseas doctors can attain the same qualifications as Australian trained doctors".

Articles and releases for the Network.

The next article and media release templates will be emailed out to the Network on 24 January. They will also be available on the Clearing House. The topic is eye safety as it is National Sight for Sunnies Day on 23 February. (See below for further information about activities)

AGPN Clearing House

Additional resources have now been added under:

- Information management
- Population health (Lifescritps)
- Communications

Divisions are encouraged to use these resources and upload any information that may be useful to the Network. For assistance in accessing the clearing house please contact Sue Aiesi on 02 6228 0822 or email saiesi@agpn.com.au

New AGPN staff

Over the last few weeks, AGPN has a number of new starters. Their profiles are listed below:

Jill Morison

Jill has recently been appointed as education and training coordinator for *headspace* the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. AGPN is part of the *headspace* consortium and is lead agency in partnership with the APS on the Service Provider Education and Training Program. More specifically, the Program will provide the workforce involved in the "Communities of Youth Services"(CYS) across Australia with skills development in engaging, assessing and providing evidence - based treatments to young people with mental health and substance abuse disorders. It is expected that the program will influence the nature of existing professional training agendas, particularly to promote innovative cross-disciplinary training approaches at the postgraduate and continuing professional development levels.

Jill comes from Ocean Grove Victoria, is a child and adolescent psychologist, formerly chief psychologist with Barwon Health and Executive Officer of the Down Syndrome Association of Victoria. She has a strong background in the education and training of the health workforce.

Anita Mansfield

Anita Mansfield started last week as the newly appointed Project Officer for the Engaging Effectively with Communities Project. The ADGP-SBO Coalition, through negotiations with DoHA, has provided funding via the 2006 performance and Development funding pool to implement a Divisional Network training program for engaging with their local communities. The training program will be implemented firstly through SBO then across the Divisional network, via the internationally acknowledged professional development training and skills enhancement program, developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), which will form the basis of the training and research material that will be adapted for Divisional personnel.

Anita comes from the Northern Rivers Division of General Practice, in Northern NSW. She has worked at the NRDGP for the past three & half years on their Youth Health Project. Anita has formal qualifications in teaching and social science and a background in community development in areas including disability and child protection.

John Couto

John Couto has recently been appointed as AGPN's Pregnancy Lifescripts coordinator. AGPN and a small consortium of partners including Davidson Consulting, Parent-Infant Research Institute, Australian College of Midwives and 3 State Based Organisations has been contracted by the Department of Health and Ageing to develop, test and evaluate a '*Pregnancy Lifescripts Kit*'. John has recently completed and Arts and a Social Work degree, he has also recently completed a research placement with the Department of Disability Health and Community Services. He has a background in research, policy development and program/project management.

News from Programs

General Practice Leadership Program

Scholarships are now available to support general practice nurses for the first intake of the General Practice Nurse Leadership Program commencing in early 2007.

The General Practice Nurse Leadership Program has been developed through AGPN and the University of New England Partnership (UNE). The aim of the program is to provide potential practice nurse leaders with the skills and confidence to become involved in planning and decision making functions in the delivery of primary care services.

The scholarships include a course fee incentive and funding to support travel and accommodation costs associated with attending the workshops.

Applications for the scholarships close on the 15th February 2007.

Enquiries regarding the scholarship should be forwarded to Julie Porritt, Principal Adviser for Nursing in General Practice on (02) 6228 0820 or email jporritt@adgp.com.au.

Further information including application forms can be found at
<http://www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=14587>

News from the national primary mental health care network

The National Primary Mental Health Care Network (NPMHCN) consists of a senior manager and a coordinator at AGPN, a GP adviser and a mental health development and liaison officer (DLOs) in each of the territory and state based organisations. Mental health program officers in each divisions are linked to their state DLO and as such the network provides an efficient and effective mechanism for the communication of new policy, initiatives and opinion between divisional and commonwealth governments levels as well as across state and federal government and non-government programs.

Better Access to Mental Health Care initiative

A new range of MBS item numbers for GPs managing patients with a mental disorder, was introduced on 1 November 2006. The uptake of these numbers has been strong with GPs claiming for 27,303 mental health care plans during November 2006. During the same time period GPs claimed over 11,000 mental health specific consultation item numbers. AGPN has received funding to develop education and training resources to help support the continued up take of the MBS item numbers and provide GPs new to mental health care planning with guides, flow charts and check lists to simplify the process and to raise awareness of the referral pathways and treatment options available. These will be available on the AGPN website in January.

The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) is currently finalising a framework for a phase 2 education and training component for the Better Access initiative and has approached AGPN for consultation and input. In November 2007 the NPMHCN undertook a survey to establish the education and training needs of divisions and the general practice setting, and data from this survey will assist in our consultation with the DoHA.

Access to Allied Psychological Services programs (ATAPS)

The Department of Health and Ageing has provided divisions with an ATAPS management plan template to complete by end of March 2007. Divisions have been asked to detail the management strategies of their ATAPS programs and some will need re-alignment to address local service delivery gaps highlighted with the introduction of the Better Access initiative. The DLOs in each state have been providing support to divisions in their re-alignment planning. As a result of requests from a number of divisions and from information gleaned from the NPMHCN, AGPN will seek generic legal advice regarding business modelling of ATAPS programs. The advice will be disseminated to divisions as soon as available.

Information, Links and Contact details.

AGPN now has a designated website for primary mental health. At www.primarymentalhealth.com.au information and resources about a range of mental health activities can be found. Alongside details about the Better Access and ATAPS programs, there are also links to other mental health professional bodies and non-government and government programs. Resources associated with *Can-Do*: mental health and substance use program and the

on-line training resource for *Managing the Mix*: your mental health and alcohol program are housed on this site.

AGPN now has a designated clearing house for the Network to share resources and information. Information sheets on the broad range of mental health care programs implemented across the divisions network are available under the communications category.

For further information from the National Primary Mental Health Care Network please contact:

Leanne Wells Manager Policy & Development Australian General Practice Network Ph: 02 6228 0854	Jane Westley National Coordinator Australian General Practice Network Ph: 02 6228 0844
Anne Diamond Development & Liaison Officer GP Divisions Victoria Ph: 03 9341 5213	Meg Bennett Development & Liaison Officer Alliance of NSW Divisions Ph: 02 9239 2900
Tonita Taylor Development & Liaison Officer Queensland Divisions of GP Ph: 07 3105 8300	Naomi Green Development & Liaison Officer WA GP Network Ph: 08 9472 2922
Janet Devlin Development & Liaison Officer SA Divisions of General Practice Inc Ph: 08 8271 8988	Claire Young Development & Liaison Officer General Practice Tasmania Ph: 03 6224 1114
Michelle Plozza Development & Liaison Officer GP & Primary Health Care NT Ph: 08 8982 1050	Dawn Roberts Development & Liaison Officer ACT State Based Organisation Ph: 02 6287 8099

Useful information from beyond the Network

RACGP Research Foundation

The RACGP Research Foundation continues to support grass roots general practice researchers in 2007–08, offering \$240,000 to College members to conduct research into aspects of family medical care, cardiovascular disease, Indigenous health, complementary medicine, motor vehicle related trauma and more. Applications **open on Thursday 1 March 2007 and close on Tuesday 8 May 2007**.

Interested applicants are advised to begin developing their research ideas, reviewing literature and seeking links with possible mentors either through the RACGP at <http://www.racgp.org.au> or the Primary Health Care Research & Information Service on <http://www.phcris.org.au/phcred/>. For more information please visit <http://www.racgp.org.au/researchfoundation> or contact Samantha Fernandes, Grants and Scholarships Administrator by email on research@racgp.org.au or telephone 03 8699 0496.

The College is also pleased to offer the RACGP Western Australia (WA) Research Award for general practitioners who have contributed to general practice research in WA. For more information please contact Lillian Tan, Marketing and Events Coordinator by email on lillian.tan@racgp.org.au or telephone 08 9489 9555.

Also available in 2007 are two National Rural Faculty (NRF) awards: the National Rural Faculty Medical Undergraduate Student Bursary and the Rural General Practice Registrar of the Year. For more information please visit <http://www.racgp.org.au/rural/> or contact the NRF Development Officer on 03 8699 0599.

Positions vacant

There are a number of upcoming positions vacant within AGPN. AGPN is a dynamic environment with enormous opportunity for candidates interested in improving and contributing to primary healthcare in Australia.

Please follow the below link to our homepage which provides a list of available positions and the duty statements.

www.adgp.com.au/site/index.cfm?display=1591

Conferences and courses

Certificate of the Australasian College of Skin Cancer Medicine

2 Day Weekend Workshops presented by

Dr Anthony Dixon

Author of Australian Family

Physician Skin Cancer Series

Dr Simon Clark

Histopathologist

These workshops are an introduction to skin cancer medicine for doctors working in general practice and skin cancer clinics. The workshops include hands on practical training and are eligible for both CME points and credit towards the ACSCM Fellowship. Those choosing to sit the certificate exam can sit either at the workshop or at a later date. This workshop will be highly focused on GP diagnosis and procedural skills in skin cancer medicine and is presented by two of Australia's foremost experts in skin cancer medicine.

Workshop Dates

Melbourne	March 3 - 4
Sydney	March 10 - 11
Brisbane	March 17 - 18
Perth	April 21 - 22
Adelaide	April 28 - 29

For further information:

phone 0414 910 355

email enq@skincancercollege.com

web www.skincancercollege.com

Rural Health Education Foundation's satellite television programs for January – June 2007

The Rural Health Education Foundation has released its program timetable for the first half of 2007. The programs that will be broadcast are as follows:

Tues 30 Jan – Dementia: Mental Health and Neurological Co-morbidities - LIVE

Tues 13 Feb – Burn Injury: Rural Perspectives – RPT

Tues 20 Feb – Quality Use of Medicine in Dementia Care – Pre-record

Tues 27 Feb – Dementia: Carers and Families – Pre-record

Tues 13 March – Chlamydia: Combating the Epidemic – LIVE

Tues 20 March – Alcohol Treatment Guidelines for Indigenous Australians – Pre-record

Tues 27 March – Asthma and Allergy: Allergic Rhinitis – LIVE

Tues 10 April – Colorectal Cancer Screening – LIVE

Tues 8 May – Wound Management: A Holistic Approach and Practical Skills Update – LIVE

Tues 22 May – “Syndrome X”: Update on Metabolic Syndrome – LIVE

Tues 12 June – Multidisciplinary Management of Chronic Disease - LIVE

Detailed information about all programs, times and access can be found by following this link, which is updated daily <http://www.rhef.com.au/timetable/timetable.html>.

Contact the Foundation via email rhef@rhef.com.au or phone (02) 6232 5480 for more information.

Workshop on Breast Cancer among Indigenous Women Albury, 7 March 2007

The National Breast Cancer Centre (NBCC) is planning a half-day training workshop in conjunction with the 9th National Rural Health Conference at Albury on Wednesday 7 March. 'Breast Cancer in Indigenous Women' will be of great value to all health workers in rural and remote areas who are involved in Indigenous health or who have contact with Indigenous women, including Indigenous health workers, GPs, rural and remote area nurses, and allied health professionals. Expressions of interest in attending the event should be made on-line at <http://9thnrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/contacts/?IntContId=66&IntCatId=4> or by email to leanne@ruralhealth.org.au

The workshop program is likely to include topics such as incidence and outcomes, Indigenous women's perceptions and experiences, and early detection, treatment and care for breast cancer. There will also be an opportunity for participants to give their own observations and experiences of breast cancer in the Indigenous community.

This pre-conference workshop will add an additional cancer focus to that provided in the 'Cancer Service Delivery Issues' session of the conference itself.

The workshop will allow for the cultural sensitivity of 'women's business' issues. If the audience is comprised primarily of female Indigenous health workers, attendance may be restricted to women.

The level of demand for the workshop will determine whether it forms part of the program for the 9th National Rural Health Conference. A final decision on the availability and a detailed program for the workshop will be available in mid-February.

For further information about the workshop program, contact Thea Kremser on 02 9036 3068 or email thea.kremser@nbcc.org.au

Sunnies for Sight Day

On the last Friday in February, ICEE - International Centre for Eyecare Education conducts "National Sunnies for Sight Day". All pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, community groups and workplaces across Australia are invited to participate in this fantastic annual fundraising event.

Those who take up the challenge are asked to make a donation by wearing sunglasses to school/work or by creating their own designer fun pair. Alternatively, you can order a merchandise kit and sell fantastic 'Sunnies' merchandise items at your workplace or simply pop in and purchase a 'Sunnies' item from our retail partners. All money raised will go towards supporting ICEE's eyecare projects in countries like Sri Lanka, Malawi, East Timor, Vanuatu, Tuvalu and in indigenous communities in Australia.

"National Sunnies for Sight Day is all about raising awareness of eye health and our role in helping those who can have their vision restored or improved. Our day is about bringing the ICEE story to the community, it is about communicating the essential issues of blindness and vision impairment and it is about raising money needed to develop ICEE's projects in Australia and across the globe. But most importantly of all it is about giving sight, something which goes to the very heart of ICEE's mission." Professor Brien Holden OAM, Chairman of ICEE. www.sunniesforsight.org.

Joint Symposium on emergency medicine

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) will hold their third joint Symposium on Wednesday 7 March 2007 in Albury. The subject of the Symposium this year will be Emergency Medicine. The event precedes the National Rural Health Conference (see following item) and contains a number of strategic papers as the introduction to some small group work and planning by leaders in medicine, health and service delivery in Australia. You are invited to be part of this group of 120 delegates who will have the opportunity to raise issues and priorities for emergency services in rural Australia for our advocacy work with Government, program planners and health services. To register, visit the NRHA website, www.ruralhealth.org.au. Symposium registration fee is \$55.

National Rural Health Conference

As advertised previously in AGPN News, the 9th National Rural Health Conference, *Standing up for Rural Health: Learning from the Past. Action for the Future*, will be held in Albury NSW from 7-10 March 2007. For further information visit www.ruralhealth.org.au

GP Education Series on breast and ovarian cancer

A training module to support general practitioners in the investigation of women who present with a new breast symptom is now available through the National Breast Cancer Centre.

The module *Investigating a new breast symptom* is the first in the National Breast Cancer Centre's evidence-based General Practitioner Education Series. The initiative aims to support general practitioners in the investigation, diagnosis, management and support of women with breast and ovarian cancer.

The module was developed in consultation with Divisions of General Practice and is designed to be implemented through Divisions. The workshop kit contains all the resources required to host a workshop including a PowerPoint presentation, notes for speakers, templates for a promotional flyer, a workshop program, evaluation form and certificate of attendance for participants.

The first module has been awarded three Category 2 Continuing Professional Development points by The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Three additional modules will be developed over the next 12 months about breast cancer in younger women, the assessment of symptoms that may be ovarian cancer and communication skills.

For more information or to order *Investigating a new breast symptom*, contact Janice O'Brien on janice.obrien@nbcc.org.au or 02 9036 3350. As new modules become available they will be sent to those who have previously received the first module.

Contact the editor

Information in this newsletter is for the use and benefit of all members of SBOs and Divisions, so please pass it on, and recycle the whole, or parts, of this publication to your members with due acknowledgement to AGPN.

If SBOs, Divisions and other readers have information for, or comments on, AGPN News please contact:

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