

# Suite Talk

The Newsletter of the NSW Operating Theatre Association Inc



September 2009

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The H1N1 Influenza Pandemic certainly presented additional challenges for perioperative nurses during the winter. Operating sessions were cancelled or curtailed due to a lack of post-operative beds, particularly in the ICU/HDU areas and increased sick leave across the nursing profession. Despite these challenges perioperative nurses continued to provide safe, quality care for their patients. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and professionalism of all of our nursing and healthcare colleagues during this difficult time.

The NSW OTA applied to the Royal College of Nursing Australia to become an Authorised Provider of Endorsed Courses (APEC) and sent two Executive members to an APEC training workshop in July. Consequently, these Executive are now authorised to endorse activities provided by NSW OTA and allocate Continuing Nurse Education (CNE) points to each. This includes our annual Conference, seminar days and other educational activities. This provides assurance for our members that these activities meet educational standards set by the RCNA. The OTA Executive believe that it is important to implement this process now as it will assist our members in developing a professional portfolio in preparation for National Registration.

A capacity group attended the Anaesthetic and Recovery Seminar day held at the 3M Education Facility in June. The day was a great success and we thank the speakers for their interesting presentations and the organising team led by Allannah Hazelgrove, the OTA Education Officer. Many thanks also to our industry partners, in particular 3M, for their continuing support.

The Zones have also been busy holding General Meetings, AGMs and Education Days, and congratulations must go to the Zone Committee members for their hard work organising these events.

I am pleased to report that three resolutions with a perioperative focus were passed at the recent NSWNA 64th Annual Conference. The first resolution called for the immediate implementation of the ACORN 2008 staffing standard as the Reasonable Workload Tool (RWT) for Operating Suites and also that 3.5 FTEs be recognised as the minimum staffing numbers required per operating room to ensure adequate supervision and education for beginning practitioners. I also had the opportunity to ask Minister Della Bosca if he would give an assurance that the ACORN 2008 staffing standards would be implemented immediately as the RWT for Operating Suites across NSW. He replied that he was not aware of the release of the ACORN 2008 Standards and that he would seek information from his Department and report back to the NSWNA. We will wait for his reply to be published in the Lamp. In his favour, he did return after morning tea and take an additional 30 mins of questions from the delegates (a number of whom received the same reply I did) and all without the usual support of the Director General.

The second resolution called for the DOH to commence negotiation regarding the implementation of subsequent updated standards with the NSWNA, once the implications of the changes had been assessed, and that these updated standards be adopted as the RWT as a matter of priority following their release.

The third resolution called upon the NSWNA to investigate the OH&S risk posed to perioperative nurses by smoke plume.

I encourage members to visit the NSW OTA website as Lilian Blair, the Editorial Liaison Officer and Website Designer has worked tirelessly to develop and reformat the site and make it more user friendly and informative.

The Conference Sub-Committee has been busy planning for the Annual Conference to be held at Newcastle 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010. A call for abstracts has been released with a closing date of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and I encourage all perioperative nurses, novice to expert, to consider submitting a paper. The Committee is particularly interested in receiving papers relating to patient safety, risk management and quality issues, as these subjects will form the overall focus of the education agenda. Also, start planning your outfit for the Masquerade Ball to be held in the magnificent Concert Hall of the City Hall building on Friday March 12<sup>th</sup>, this event is sure to be a highlight of the social calendar in 2010.

Regards

*Kerry Rodgers*  
**President**

### Perioperative Educators' Seminar Day

The fourth Perioperative Educators' Seminar Day was held at Royal Hospital for Women on Friday 21 August with forty participants, including three from Queensland and two from South Australia. The program included presentations on Essentials of Care and how this NSW Health funded project can be developed to incorporate the perioperative environment. Kathryn Taaffe, CNC, RPAH described the ins and outs of policy development, with lots of handy hints. Kim Bryant, Professional Officer, Nurses & Midwives Board, NSW (and perioperative nurse) discussed national registration and Suellen Moore NEd, St George Hospital gave some excellent suggestions on developing education resources and assessment tools for inclusion in professional portfolios. There was some lively discussion during the Open Forum on a range of topics and the day ended with a presentation from Sally Sutherland-Fraser, CNC, SESIAHS on preparing work place assessors – again lots of practical information which was well received by the participants.

We are grateful to Device Technology, Coop Bookshop, 3M and Spiggle & Theis for supporting the day by providing a trade expo and to the Royal Hospital for Women for the excellent venue.



Luciana S.Y. Lo,  
UTS international  
PG student and  
senior Malaysian  
perioperative nurse  
with Lynley Butler

Norann Payne,  
Kim Howe and  
Barbara Hudson



South  
Australian  
visitors Tina  
Sayce and  
Margaret  
Wheeler



Executive Members Katie Frankiewicz,  
Allanah Hazelgrove, Deb Carter with  
Maggie Blankevoort

**ACORN UPDATE by  
Fran O'Brien, NSW Director**

Board Meeting was held 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> July in Adelaide.  
The main points discussed:

- ACORN is developing a professional portfolio template for all members. This will be provided on a USB and distributed free of charge to members.
- Generic count sheets are also being developed which when finalised will be circulated to the Local Associations for comment.
- The updated Scrubbing, Gowning and Gloving DVD should be available for sale in approximately 8-12 weeks.
- The Standards are continuing to be reviewed. Thank you to everyone that has had involvement. The current Standards will be available online to members around October.
- AS 4187 remains 'up in the air' as Standards Australia no longer wish to continue with this Standard. The key stakeholders continue to lobby Standards Australia about the importance of maintaining this Standard.
- Preparation for 2010 ACORN Conference is gathering momentum. Many stands have already been allocated and the call for Abstracts close 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The Marketing Committee has been busy promoting Perioperative Nurses Week which will commence on 12<sup>th</sup> October, as this was the date that ACORN was established. The ACORN website will be upgraded shortly making it more interactive and incorporating the Special Interest Groups. The ACORN Annual Report will be circulated electronically next year for those who wish to receive it via this method. A letter will be sent out shortly informing members of this new option.
- Please make sure that you put 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010 in your diaries because Tracy and I hope to see you all 'going West' to the ACORN Conference in Perth, WA.

**Membership Drive**

Congratulations to everyone for actively promoting NSWOTA to your colleagues. The response to our membership drive was absolutely outstanding. From January to our Conference in April, 79 new members joined us. All the new members, their nominators and workplaces went into a draw to win \$200 Peters of Kensington gift voucher and a copy of '*Perioperative Nursing: An Introductory Text*'

And the winners are:

- Linley Cook from Nepean Hospital
- Helen Vagoor from RPAH

**Congratulations!**

**Sydney South West AHS Excellence in  
Perioperative Nursing Award**

Stephanie Jackman, a recent graduate of the UTS Graduate Certificate in Perioperative Nursing course, was the recipient of inaugural *Sydney South West Area Health Service Excellence in Perioperative Nursing Postgraduate Studies Award*. Stephanie received her award certificate during a ceremony held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2009 at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA). This award, which is available to students completing the jointly offered UTS and Sydney South West Area Health Service (SSW) Graduate Certificate in Perioperative Nursing, is made based on an individual's performance across a range of professional and academic criteria; and includes both clinical and theoretical components.



Lois Hamlin, UTS, Kathryn Taaffe, CNC,  
Stephanie Jackman and Linda Furness,  
NM, RPAH



## SURGICAL PLUME WORKING PARTY

The Surgical Plume Working Party has met to collate our literature review. The news that NSW Nurses Association has agreed to support us in examining the effects of surgical plume on perioperative nurses will be followed up.

Penny Smalley and Kay Ball, from the US, who will be known to many members as a leading experts on surgical plume have pledged their support and agreed to assist us. We hope that Penny will meet with the Working Party when she next visits Sydney on one of her lecture tours.

So if you are interested in participating on the Working Party with this important workplace issue, please contact the OTA.

### **Transition to Specialty Nursing Program**

The NSWOTA is in discussions with NSW Health regarding the opportunity to participate in an exciting project already being used by ICU and ED RNs. A perioperative transition program would provide a competency based education course to assist RNs transitioning into perioperative nursing and available across NSW in flexible mode. Discussions are in their early stages with NSW Health, but with a framework already in place, courtesy of the ICU/ED programs, we hope that speedy progress can be made to develop the required perioperative content.

### **OTA Seminar Day**

The final NSW OTA Seminar Day for 2009 will have an instrument/circulating nurse theme and will be held on:

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November**  
*3M Innovations Centre, Pymble*

Registration Forms will be  
circulated shortly

### **Perioperative Modeling Care Project**

Members of the Executive met with Mary Chiarella to finalise plans for commencing the project. The goal of the project is for perioperative nurses in NSW public hospital to identify opportunities and change the way care is delivered in order to make better use of available resources to provide optimal patient care.

The project will consist of twenty nursing teams from all Area Health Services in NSW. Two team leaders from each team will attend four workshops beginning in November 2009 and continuing through 2010. The team leaders will then work with their workplace teams to select and action a workable plan to bring about changes in their workplace.

Invitations will soon be sent to Area Directors of Nursing seeking the participation of perioperative nurses in their Areas.

Further information with details of workshops will be provided in the near future. Check the NSWOTA website.

## Perioperative nurses, we need your help!

Self-assessment of competence provides an effective means that may assist perioperative nurses to maintain and improve their practice, by identifying strengths and areas for further improvement. The Revised Perceived Competence Scale (Rev-PCS) has been developed based on perioperative practise, (Gillespie et al, 2008) and we now wish to undertake further research, to scientifically test this scale.

Consequently, we will soon be surveying all members of ACORN and would like to invite you as an ACORN member to complete a questionnaire about your perceptions of competence as an OR nurse.

This questionnaire will be mailed to you and we are seeking your cooperation in filling it out and returning it to us (in pre-paid envelope). The survey is anonymous, and your consent implied by the return of the completed survey form.

This research is jointly funded by the NSW Operating Theatre Association Inc. (NSW OTA) and the Perioperative Nurses Association of Queensland (PNAQ).

If you have any questions about this research please do not hesitate to contact one of us:

Dr Brigid Gillespie – Email: [B.Gillespie@griffith.edu.au](mailto:B.Gillespie@griffith.edu.au) Tel: (07) 5552 9718

Dr Lois Hamlin – Email: [lois.hamlin@uts.edu.au](mailto:lois.hamlin@uts.edu.au) Tel: (02) 9514 5120

### Undergraduate Nurses - Where are you??

Anecdotal evidence from several members indicates that some operating suites are not getting the same numbers of undergraduate nursing students on clinical placement as in previous years. Certainly at Prince of Wales/Sydney Children's Hospital (POW/SCH), we have had very few undergraduates this year to date. The universities who offer perioperative electives eg ACU and UTS still have large intakes and clinical placements, but it is some of the other universities without the specialty electives that are of concern. In discussion with a colleague at University of Western Sydney (UWS), it seems that curriculum changes at UWS have meant that surgical nursing subjects are now offered in 2<sup>nd</sup> year. This means that opportunities for students to undertake a clinical placement in operating theatre now occur in 2<sup>nd</sup> year not 3<sup>rd</sup> year. According to my UWS contact, a number of operating theatres are refusing to take 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduates. The reasons for this may be that the criteria set by hospitals stipulating the number and year of students they are willing to accept state 3<sup>rd</sup> year only. At POW/SCH we have been in touch with our hospital's undergraduate coordinator to ensure that our criteria has been altered to include 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year. So if you have also seen a reduction in numbers of undergraduates, it might be worth checking with your local or Area undergraduate coordinator and altering your criteria. Personally I do not mind what year the undergraduates are when they come to us, we are happy to provide them with good clinical experiences and encourage them to return later in their programs if an elective is offered and certainly promote opportunities as New Graduates in the perioperative specialty.

I would be interested to hear from you regarding whether you are experiencing similar reductions in undergraduates and the possible reasons.

Menna Davies

[menna.davies@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:menna.davies@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

## ZONE NEWS

### **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June Zone 5 Casino Education Day**

There was a fantastic turnout of 24 nurses. Sessions included: foot surgery and the treatment of Bunions, diagnosis and treatment of Melanoma, difficult Airway Management. Colleen Nicholls then followed with her feedback from attending the EORNA Conference in Copenhagen, courtesy of an NSW OTA conference grant. The next speaker presented on blood transfusion and other haematology issues - and this provoked much conversation on the need for a blood transfusion group within the network to oversee practices. Fran from Casino presented her perioperative collage and then invited us all to paint or write something on an empty canvas that showed our own perception of theatre, our work or our area or ourselves. We ended up with a fantastic canvas that Fran is going to enter on our behalf in the Breast Cancer Art Exhibition that is running soon. From this we made the suggestion that we call on Fran and her ideas for the next NSW OTA poster competition. The day was sponsored by Molnelyke and Medchem who sponsored lunch and donated several Lucky Door prizes.

### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July Zone 1 Newcastle Education Day & AGM**

Allanah Hazelgrove attended on behalf of the NSW OTA Executive. Sessions included: malignant hyperthermia, Margaret Nowak described the experience of the older perioperative nurse, the importance of Fluid Balance of the surgical patient. Jan Poole Hill was announced the winner of the \$1250 J&J Education Award. Chloe Owens and Leah Humphreys presented a brief paper on their experience of speaking at the NSW OTA Annual State Conference in 2009, Mary Chiarella presenting on legal and ethical issues. A panel discussion including Mary, Ros Berryman together with local perioperative nurses and doctors investigated issues included in a hypothetical scenario. The trade display had approximately 20 booths. The Annual General Meeting was held and the new executive is as follows:

President, Lynn Hoey (Newcastle Private), Secretary, Yvonne van Netten (John Hunter), Treasurer, Marilyn Randall (Wyangong).

Overall the day was a great success and enjoyed by all in attendance. During the AGM it was discussed that Zone 1 may not hold a conference in 2010 in its present format due to the NSW OTA State Conference being in Newcastle in March and ACORN National Conference in Perth in May

### **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July Zone 2 Lithgow**

Tracy Kerle attended on behalf of the NSW OTA Executive. The sessions included: PPH, malignant hyperthermia (MH) and VTE prevention. The PPH lecture gave a great action plan to follow to assess, treat and monitor PPH. The interactive malignant hyperthermia session covered the mechanisms associated with MH, worked through action cards and roles in this emergency situation, how to draw up the solution and the difficulties associated with this, along with the universal set up of these trolleys and equipment needs.

### **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August Zone 7 Canberra Education Day & AGM held at Kamberra Wine Centre**

Dr Lois Hamlin attended on behalf of the NSW OTA Executive There were approximately 50 perioperative nurses and 8 companies participating with trade displays, including Big Green, Device Technology and Multigate. Sessions included: Mercy Ships in Benin, organ donation and a session from Stryker. Additionally, there was a lively, interactive session about dealing with the erosion of supernumery time for New Graduate and other new nurses moving into the perioperative environment. The presentation utilised during the session has been archived with the OTA secretarial assistant, and is available for future use. One topic arising out of the debate was a request for the OTA to develop standardised, competency assessment tools. Dr Hamlin has since tabled this as an agenda item for the September executive committee meeting

### ***Upcoming Dates for Zone Education Days and AGMs***

#### **Zone 6**

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September Wollongong**

#### **Zone 3**

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 8.00am – 4.00pm  
At UNE Building Fitzroy Street, Tamworth**

#### **Zone 5**

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October Coffs Harbour**

#### **Zone 2**

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> October Bathurst**