

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2016-17

We are indeed at the point of moving ahead as an organisation that can start providing for the health needs of our community. Since the Government of the day tried to squeeze Divisions of General Practice out of existence, the Board has been diligently working through ways of maintaining our presence, raising the needs and concerns of our members and experimenting with initiatives that could enable us to move forward.

Our last strategic planning day went “**Back to Basics**”. As an organisation, we are required to work within the boundaries of our Constitution and undertake the activities contained within the stated Objects. It was an energising exercise to revisit the stated objects, set in place in 1994, in the light of the challenges of current environment. There was no need to suggest changes but there was a need to embrace new opportunities supported by the extensive experience and reputation still held within the organisation while we still had it.

There is no doubt that the Nepean Blue Mountains PHN and in fact all PHNs, are moving towards an Agency of the Federal Department of Health. They can no longer run service type programs but must outsource them. They will become the Administrative funders. Your Board believes that we should be moving into this space to ensure that the interface between General Practice and the community is maintained for the best outcomes of all.

We are projecting an image of a professional Association not only to our members but also the wider community. We are an independent voice able to raise issues and deal with them as they arise.

We are still financially viable and in the position to remain so for several years. Cost savings are being realised with consolidating

bank accounts and term deposits. We now have a Bpay facility set up. The auditor did not make any recommendations and all accounts records were well maintained.

The Consumer Reference Group has provided valuable insights from a community perspective to the Board including participating at the Strategic Planning days. Its members truly represents the demographic population of the Penrith LGA. In equipping itself for the role as a consumer it has educated itself on Charter of Health Rights and Standard 2 of the National Quality Health Standards, as well attendance at the Consumers NSW and Mental Health Conferences.

In an attempt to explore other means to bring in revenue we entered into an agreement with Tonic Health. Whilst this was not as productive as anticipated, valuable lessons were learnt and there was significant exposure to local Practices that the Network was an active organisation. The evening event with Dr Norman Swan was valuable where we were a co-sponsor. Negotiations have commenced with HCF to co-sponsor community health awareness forums

Two new members were received into the Association.

### ADVOCATE

The Network raised concerns for the membership on the impact of the Medicare Rebate freeze, with politicians and the local media. A significant article was run in the Penrith Gazette. It has been found that the interface with the Consumer Reference Group has presented avenues for greater understanding by the community of issues facing General Practice.

Collectively the CRG membership is in contact with over 1000 community members. This allows a two way feedback of mutual understanding of issues.

The Company Secretary has been able to assist members in a number of requests as well as the community through the website contact request page.

The involvement of three members on the **GP Advisory Committee** and the **GP Clinical Council** sponsored by the NBM PHC has enabled the voice of GP to not only be heard, but to help shape health policy.

Aspects for greater promotion and engagement with placement of Registrars are also being pursued.

### EDUCATE

We have maintained regular Friday CPD events and one evening event. This has the benefit of allowing GPs to select subject matter that is of interest to GPs. The format also allows greater time for questions and exploring current issues. It also provides an opportunity for GPs to network with their colleagues. We also have an input into the PHN CPD events.

### COMMUNICATE

The launch of the new Website provided a new look that enabled easy navigation and relevant information to GPs and the community as well as a greater relationship with Specialists. There have been many positive comments on the website and this is also reflected in the number of hits.

Regular quarterly newsheets are being worked upon and joint PHN/NGPN co badged bulletins and advertising have been pursued.

A new membership Brochure was designed and distributed with Membership renewals. It explores the question of "Why should I be a member"

Relationships are also being fostered with local press and media.

### Loss of Members

It was a great sense of loss that we record the passing of 3 members during the year. Dr Muthappa (Srini) Srinivassa, Past Chair  
Dr Elizabeth Torrance, Member and  
Dr John Bounds Past Chair

### Service Recognition Awards

Dr J. Kidd, founding Chair, was requested to make presentations at the December AGM to recognise the service of Directors and staff.

**15 Year recognition:** Dr Steven Wong, Dr Shiva Prakash OAM & Mr Michael Edwards (Company Secretary)

**10 Year Service:** Dr Hany Gayed & Mr Joe Rzepecki (Co Chair Consumer Reference Group)



Dr Kidd presents awards to Dr Hany Gayed & Dr Steven Wong



Dr Gayed presenting awards to Dr Shiva Prakash, Mr Joe Rzepecki and (below) Mr Michael Edwards

