



# *Newsletter, February 2003*

## *Australasian Sleep Association*

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Dr Michael Dodd**



GREETINGS FOR 2003! This is the first newsletter of the year. I hope all members of the Australasian Sleep Association have a happy and prosperous year.

Since the last newsletter was distributed our Annual Scientific Meeting has been held in Hobart. I am pleased to report that we had a record number of delegates attend what was an excellent meeting. The success of the meeting is partly due to the fact that ASTA and the ASA have combined forces to hold a single meeting. The quality of our overseas and guest speakers was extremely high. Susan Redline, Jan Hedner, Guy Warman and Martin Delatycki, all provided

excellent presentations and their contributions in the discussions occurring at the other parts of the meeting were invaluable. In fact the quality of all presentations, our own junior and senior presenters as well, was as high as I have ever seen it. Peter Solin, our Clinical Chair, introduced the Year in Review for the first time. This initiative received a lot of positive feedback so we hope to keep that aspect of the program continuing in the future. One of the highlights of the meeting was the official opening by the Governor of Tasmania. The first day was followed by an evening cocktail party, hosted by the Governor, at Government House, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all of those who attended. The other social highlight of the meeting was the Annual Dinner. It is planned to continue to include payment for the dinner in the cost of registration of the meeting.

Planning for this year's meeting is well underway under direction of Alister Neill, the Research Chair. I heartily congratulate Alister for the quality of the Hobart Meeting and I am sure our next meeting in Auckland will be just as good. Cliff Saper has agreed to be our guest speaker on this occasion. Although most of us will have a bit further to travel I am hopeful that as many of you as possible will see a way to New Zealand for the meeting.

In the last Newsletter I reported to you that for the APSS meeting in Chicago in June of this year there is a scholarship provided by the WFSRS for one of our trainees who have had a paper accepted for presentation at the meeting to go on a scholarship. Details about that scholarship are elsewhere in this Newsletter and I encourage all of the trainees who have had a paper accepted to apply for the grant although unfortunately there will only be one successful applicant. This meeting is celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of REM sleep. The ASA has been invited to participate in a commemorative symposium. Our founding

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President, Professor Colin Sullivan, has agreed to speak at the meeting giving an historical perspective of the development of sleep medicine in Australia.

Whilst speaking of the WFSRS I am pleased to report that they have agreed to hold their meeting in 2007 in Cairns. At this stage former Presidents of the ASA, Professor Ron Grunstein and Professor John Wheatley have taken the reins in beginning to organize that meeting. It is planned that we will begin advertising at the Chicago meeting of the APSS. It falls to ASA to provide the funding to get this meeting under way, and therefore all ASA members have a vested interest in ensuring the success of the meeting.

At this stage I wish to register a vote of thanks to our outgoing Honorary Secretary, David Joffe, who has served our Association extremely well for his three years in office. David's position has been taken by Arthur Teng, a pediatrician who works in Sydney, Arthur's enthusiasm, drive and sense of humour have already been noted in his work on the Executive and I wish him well for the remainder of his term. I also have pleasure in welcoming Peter Cistulli who has been elected to become the next President of the Association. *Michael Dodd*



## **THE CLINICAL PAGE Dr Peter Solin**

Dear Members,

As the recent conference in Hobart begins to slip from our memory, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to its success. We will look at the feedback evaluation forms with great interest, trying to improve on any negative aspects, and continuing to build on constructive and positive feedback. Remember, the conference is your conference, so if you have any strong suggestions about the content, please don't hesitate to let us know.

The final submission for the Fitness to Drive Guidelines is ready. It would like to thank the members for their comments, which were incorporated to make the document as user-friendly as possible. Indeed the quality of the document has been recognised by the College of Physicians, and will be highlighted in a presentation at the RACP annual scientific meeting in Hobart in May of 2003, and will be used as an example of the ability to use evidence based medicine to construct guidelines. When the guidelines are published in 2003, we have recommended that there be an information component for the community such as through a radio campaign, or through pamphlets put into doctors' waiting rooms.

In answer to the clinical conundrum from the last edition, most respondents would strongly urge the patient not to drive and would heavily counsel the family, because of the potential lack of insight of the patient. Potentially driving with a supervising adult or limiting driving to urban (low speed) environments was suggested.

As knowledge and appreciation of sleep disorders grows in the community, and amongst healthcare professionals, the demands on the ASA will grow. One challenge will be for the clinical arm of the ASA to endeavour to construct a reasonable argument for the development of a health insurance commission item number to cover the cost of introducing and running non-invasive ventilation. Non-invasive ventilation is being used in respiratory wards, in respiratory based high dependency units, and in the emergency department in acute settings. In the intensive care unit, when a switch is made from a ventilator to a non-invasive unit, DRG weightings are substantially reduced. It is our opinion that adequate recognition and remuneration for non-invasive ventilation in these settings is well overdue.

On another note, Compumedics is in the process of producing an educational poster for waiting rooms, which highlights sleep disorders. When it has been produced, we will let the membership know how to obtain copies.

*Peter Solin*



## HONORARY SECRETARY

**Dr Arthur Teng**

The first national **Pediatric Sleep Medicine Conference in China** was staged from November 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> in Beijing. The conference marked the official establishment of the China-Australia Children's Sleep Medicine Research Centre.

Professor Xicheng Liu was senior visiting scholar from the National Education Ministry of the People's Republic of China in 2001. During his stay in Sydney, Professor Liu worked at the sleep units in the two main children's hospitals and Sydney and with Professor Colin Sullivan. During this productive time, there was extensive discussion about the impact of sleep disordered breathing and asthma. These working meetings and the subsequent communications between the David Read Laboratory and Beijing Children's Hospital led to the current agreement to establish the China-Australia Children's Sleep Medicine Research Centre.

The purpose of this Centre was a long term working collaboration, which will lead to the development of pediatric sleep medicine in China, and an ongoing research collaboration, academic and clinical communication, in part utilising a telemedicine link for staff training, teliagnosis and consultation.



Prof Colin Sullivan and Prof Liu Xicheng

The participants at the conference and opening ceremony included Miss Carolyn Hughes (the Trade Counsellor of the Australian Embassy), Prof. Colin Sullivan (Director of David Read Laboratories, Sydney University, Director of the Australian Centre for Advanced Medical Technology), myself (the Head of Sleep Medicine at Sydney Children's Hospital, Secretary of the Australasian Sleep Association), Prof. Liu Xicheng (the executive chairman of China—Australia Children's Sleep Medicine Research Centre and Pediatric Professor of Capital Medicine Science University), Prof. Li Zhongzhi (the President of Beijing Children's Hospital) Prof. Jiang Zaifang (Honorary President of Chinese Pediatric Association), Prof. He Xiaohu (Chairman of Chinese Paediatric Association), Prof. Shen Kunling (the Vice President of Beijing Children's Hospital). Mr. Lance Thomas (Asia-Pacific Business Development Manager of Compumedics Ltd.).

The establishment of the Centre represents another bridge of friendship for academic and clinical exchange. This is crucial for the rapid dissemination of research data, ideas and expertise in a sub-specialised but rapidly emerging area of medicine.

More than 200 representatives from 23 provinces attended the ceremony and conference in Beijing. Professor Sullivan's and my lectures covered broad and more specific areas of respiratory and non-respiratory sleep medicine. Combined with eminent local speakers, vigorous academic discussions and communication was ensured in the meeting. This culminated in the inauguration of the Chinese Pediatric Sleep Medicine Cooperative Group was established after this conference. Prof. Liu Xicheng was elected the chairman of this group. This is a landmark in the history of Sleep Medicine in China.

*Arthur Teng*

## Revised Driver Medical Standards: “Purple Book” arriving mid-2003.

The newly-revised medical standards for commercial and private vehicle drivers, *Assessing Fitness to Drive*, will be available from mid-2003. The book replaces the two previous publications, *Medical Examinations for Commercial Vehicle Drivers* (1997) and *Assessing Fitness to Drive* (2001). The book has been developed by the National Road Transport Commission (NRTC) and is being published and distributed by Austroads ([www.austroads.com.au](http://www.austroads.com.au)). The chapter on sleep disorders has been reviewed with input from the ASA, in particular Dr Peter Solin. The TSANZ also contributed to the chapter.

According to Austroads, the publication will provide:

- A clear statement of responsibilities for medical practitioners patients/drivers and Licensing Authorities with respect to the licensing process;
- A discussion of legal and ethical considerations, including the State and Territory requirements;
- Guidance with respect to the role of “conditional” licences as well as the management of temporary illnesses and undifferentiated illnesses;
- Flow charts summarising the examination requirements and decision making processes; and
- Template forms for patient questionnaires and examination records.

There will be accompanying patient information leaflets which will emphasise patient responsibility and explain the role of the medical practitioner in providing advice regarding fitness to drive.

Copies will be mailed out to members and will also be available on-line. An on-line tutorial program is also planned.

## ASA 2002 Hobart meeting: comments from junior members

After the conference I asked a few members to write down what they found interesting.

**Hima Vedam**, a respiratory advanced trainee from Victoria commented “I really enjoyed the sessions on insomnia. They provided practical management strategies for a difficult clinical problem.”

“I particularly enjoyed the neuro-cognitive session on impaired performance on Sunday afternoon. The presentations were very informative and highlighted the need for more research in this area. I thought the overview by Professor Susan Redline was excellent and the research of the effects of OSA on driving was very interesting. The conference was held at a fantastic venue this year and I think the standard and diversity of the research presented was excellent. I look forward to next years' conference!”

**Siobhan Banks** is studying a PhD at Flinders University examining the neurobehavioural consequences of daytime sleepiness.

“While the conference on the whole was very educational and of high quality, I was especially impressed and interested by the work produced by Professor Leon Lack and his group in Flinders on their latest intensive treatment for primary insomnia.” **Sridhar Venkateswaran**, a respiratory advanced trainee from Brisbane.

**Laurel Teoh**, Paediatric Respiratory Fellow from Sydney Children’s Hospital, NSW commented, “The session on *Hypocretin/orexin system – narcolepsy unlocked?* given by Dr John Swieca was excellent. It is fascinating to learn that the majority of narcoleptics, in particular the HLA positive ones, may have had an auto-immune knockout of hypocretin-containing neurons in the central nervous system at the onset of their symptoms. The animal model showed improvement in narcoleptic symptoms with the administration of intravenous hypocretin-1, which may have implications for the management of human narcolepsy. Also, I found the video clip of the cataplectic rat a highlight.

“I also enjoyed the session on *The child is not a scaled down adult* presented by Dr Michael Adamson who reinforced the fact that the pathophysiology of obstructive sleep apnoea in children is multifactorial, being a combination of altered airway structure, reduced neuromuscular tone and genetic predisposition. He emphasized that these factors must be appreciated by both adult and paediatric sleep physicians as the child is not a scaled down adult - a very important statement.”

## **OTHER NOTICES**

### **Helen Bearpark Memorial Scholarship**

The purpose of this scholarship is to facilitate international travel and exchange in order to develop skills in sleep research or clinical sleep medicine. The Scholarship is open to any member of ASA or ASTA to travel overseas, or someone from overseas sponsored by an ASA or ASTA member to travel to Australia.

The closing date for applications for the Scholarship is 31 July 2003. Applications received after that date will not be considered until 2004. The award for 2003 will be valued at A\$6,000.00.

### **Funding for a trainee to attend WFSRS June 2003, Chicago.**

As previously announced the World Federation of Sleep Research Societies will fund airfare and meeting registration for one trainee from the ASA to attend and present an abstract to their next meeting. Recipients of the funding will be encouraged to spend some time at a laboratory in the USA which interests them.

If you have had an abstract accepted for presentation at the Congress, and would like to be considered for this funding. Please send a copy of your abstract, together with notification of acceptance from APSS, and confirmation of your status as Trainee (such as a letter from your supervisor) to the ASA Secretariat by 30 March 2003.

Full details can be obtained from the WebSite at [www.sleepaus.on.net](http://www.sleepaus.on.net), or from the ASA Secretariat

### **2003 ASA/ASTA Annual Scientific Meeting**

You may think the last conference was just concluded, but planning is under-way for 10-12 October 2003...

It will be held in the Hyatt Regency, Auckland, New Zealand. The guest speaker will be Professor Cliff Saper, from the Department of Neurology, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School.

### **Australian Society of Orthodontists Foundation for Research and Education, Meeting 2003 and AGM**

This will be held 28-29<sup>th</sup> March 2003 at the Sofitel Hotel Melbourne. Talks on the first day of the meeting will focus on dental and craniofacial aspects of obstructive sleep apnoea, involving local and overseas speakers. For further information, contact the ASO Foundation, c/o Dr H Wasilewsky, 2 Harkness St, Woollahra NSW 2025.

### **New Journal: *Sleep and Biological Rhythms***

The Japanese Society for Sleep Research are launching a new journal this year. It will be their official journal, and is published by Blackwell. Enquiries, email: [sbr@belle.shiga-med.ac.jp](mailto:sbr@belle.shiga-med.ac.jp).

### **Collaborators for Narcolepsy Research sought**

Professor Jerry Siegel (Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, University of California Los Angeles) is investigating hypocretin cell loss in narcolepsy, and is seeking a collaborator with available brain tissue from humans with narcolepsy. Enquiries, email: [JSiegel@UCLA.edu](mailto:JSiegel@UCLA.edu) or <http://www.npi.ucla.edu/sleepresearch>

## Suggestions for the Newsletter welcome

I would appreciate suggestions on what you would like included and how it could be improved. I would also welcome submissions of content to the newsletter. Please contact me by email [kwkh@tpg.com.au](mailto:kwkh@tpg.com.au)... *Keith Wong*

## Paediatric News

Dr Carolyn Dakin will commence as the third respiratory/sleep paediatrician at the Mater Children's Hospital, Brisbane in March 2003. She originally trained in Sydney (Sydney Children's and Westmead) and then went to Auckland where she assisted in the establishment of a paediatric sleep service.

Congratulations to Karen Waters and Declan Kennedy who were awarded NHMRC Grants

Dr. Karen Waters at The Children's Hospital, Westmead, will study complications of obstructive sleep apnoea and possible modes of inheritance in a large extended family.

Dr J. Declan Kennedy at Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide, will assess neurocognitive function in children awaiting adenotonsillectomy and retest them several months post operatively to see if there are changes in intelligence, memory, attention and behaviour.

## Historical records for the association: a request from Stephanie Blower

I am currently trying to ensure that a complete set of Proceedings from past Conferences is held in the Secretariat, and appear to be missing some years. It may be that meetings were not held that particular year, or proceedings were not produced, if you can throw any light on this it would be greatly appreciated. The missing years are 1988 (which should have been the first meeting), and 1990.

Minutes of Annual General Meetings since 1996 are on file, but nothing prior to this, it would be wonderful to have a full set for the archives, but at least if we could locate copies of the inaugural meetings it would help - if you have any can you please send a copy. Also if any past members of the Executive have copies of old Executive Minutes, these would be appreciated too, I have a full set from 1998, and a few odd ones from 1995 to 1997, but I have none prior to that. So please look through those dusty files and book cases and see what you can find. THANKS, *Stephanie*



**New Investigators at the ASA 2002 meeting**

### DATES FOR THE DIARY

4-9 April 2003 TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting, Adelaide.

26 May 2003 Medical Simulation Symposium, Adelaide. Keynote speaker Dr Bowen Loftin.  
See [www.simtect.com](http://www.simtect.com).

3-8 June 2003 WFSRS meeting in conjunction with 17th APSS Meeting, Chicago, USA.

29 June – 3 July 2003 Seventh World Congress on Sleep Apnoea, Helsinki, Finland. See [www.neuro.org/sleepapnea2003](http://www.neuro.org/sleepapnea2003)

10-12 October 2003 ASA/ASTA Annual Scientific Meeting, Hyatt Regency, Auckland NZ.

20-23 November 2003 ASRS Congress, Zhuhai (near Macao), China.

See [www.shisa-sleep.com](http://www.shisa-sleep.com)