



Presidents Chapter Report For 2006 Annual General Meeting

ANZBA has continued to flourish during 2006.

To begin, congratulations to Hugh Martin who was awarded the AM in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to burns, a well deserved honour and a great achievement. Also congratulations to Richard Wong She, who has been appointed Director of the Middlemore Unit in New Zealand.

The Sydney ASM was well attended and enjoyable and even profitable, to the tune of \$448! All units were well represented both in the scientific sessions and on the water. We are as always, indebted to all our sponsors and particularly to Smith & Nephew without whose continued involvement the meeting would be a poor affair. S&N should be congratulated for their commitment to the management of burns patients in general and for their continued support for innovation and research in our field.

A number of recent initiatives have progressed. Two surgeons visited Sydney as part of ANZBA's Guest Assistance Program that was set up in 2004 to fund two visits by burns staff from the developing world to the ASM. As those who attended are aware, Dr. Okti Poki from PNG and Dr. Chandini Perera from Sri Lanka both gave us a fascinating insight in to their local environment and I hope in turn benefited from their experience with us. John Vandervord has established an ongoing link with Sri Lanka which I would like to see come under the ANZBA umbrella in the future. PNG is more difficult but having established contacts Okti is well placed to ask for ANZBA's assistance in the future. This year we are capitalising on an established link with the Vietnamese Burns Institute which was established by ANZBA, Concord Hospital, the NSW SBIS and the Hoc Mei institute at Royal North Shore Hospital, and inviting a Burns Surgeon and the Institute's senior Burns Nurse. They will spend time at the conference and then go back to Sydney to spend two weeks at three burns units. We have an application from a Surgeon from Bangladesh for 2007. As much as possible we have extended the program to include not only a surgeon but also a senior burns nurse or a member of the burns allied health staff. Other overseas links included sponsorship by ANZBA, Rotary and the RACS for a six-week visit by a surgeon and two nurses from Timor Leste. The visit was very successful and marred only by the necessity of a rapid departure from Sydney to Dili at the outbreak of the unrest in Timor. As with PNG, good links have been established which will I am certain promote an exchange of burns staff between our two countries in the future. Roy Kimble has been involved with the RACS "Project China" and we will be able build on this relationship when ANZBA visits Hong Kong as part of the RACS meeting in 2008.

I believe that the increasing levels of exchange visits between our units and burns units overseas which to date have been arranged to a large extent at a personal level, give ANZBA a unique opportunity to become established in the provision of expertise for the developing world. It is important that the visits and exchanges occur under ANZBA's banner and, without in any way suggesting that ANZBA should "cash in" on these links, I would urge those involved to promote ANZBA at every opportunity. ANZBA can provide a greater level of authority at governmental level to facilitate these visits and open up opportunities for interested staff from all the units. I feel strongly that the State representatives should play a more active role in disseminating information about their unit's activity to the membership at large throughout the year.

The EMSB course continues to be very well subscribed and very successful. This year saw the inauguration of the South African EMSB course in Cape Town under ANZBA's auspices; and also a visit by Erik La Hei to the Dutch Burns Foundation in Rotterdam who continue to teach the ANZBA EMSB. We owe a great debt of gratitude to all our coordinators and instructors who travel around the country to teach; and particular thanks to Peter Maitz who has taken over from Hugh Martin as the driving force behind the EMSB. The cost in time and effort is huge and to ensure EMSB's continued success we must have a greater involvement from States other than NSW, Queensland and South Australia whose burns staff have been pre-eminent. A number of successful courses have been run in New Zealand this year and I would like to congratulate those involved as well as David Read from Darwin who has made the considerable effort to become an instructor.

The ANZBA database is beginning to collect data from all the units. The database is quite small at present, which allows the task of data entry to be accomplished with little effort. The expansion of the database will have to await the deployment of sufficient personnel in each of our units. The establishment of the national database is a considerable achievement for which we have to thank Yvonne Singer and Heather Cleland's unit at the Alfred. Natalie Picton at the Alfred has recently become involved and announced the launch of "BonANZBA" news update. Anyone who does not know what "BonANZBA" is should go to the website or contact Natalie. Each unit must please take the opportunity to enter data so that the process is meaningful.

The issue of Burn camps, which caused some controversy among the membership, has been resolved. ANZBA has published a list of considerations along with the names of some of the organisations who provide these activities. Physical and psychological rehabilitation is obviously a complex and lengthy process. Units treating burns must remain involved and in so doing be familiar with lay organisations who provide burns support and understand the issues involved. I urge all members to look at ANZBA's considerations on the subject.

Surgical training has been a particular interest of mine, and after a long process of consultation with Burns surgeons across the country, I have on behalf of ANZBA submitted a proposal to the three Boards (Plastic, General and Paediatric) at RACS to identify and accredit Burns training positions in the major burns units. This will raise the standard of Australian applicants to these positions, and will enable us to rely less on O/S trainees and identify a clear pathway for interested surgical trainees to specialise in burns. While I am sure a commitment is required from us as a group of surgeons to develop an accreditation process I am equally sure that we collectively will be up to the task.

We have made sporadic forays into some aspects of burn prevention this year. Orlando - Wyndham Wines donated a substantial sum of money to The NSW SBIS which stimulated the development of a burns prevention program aimed at high school students in years 7 and 8. This program was launched at a high school in Tamworth in November, with considerable success. The program required an enormous outlay in terms of time and numbers of staff and is not in its present format applicable generally. The concept is however sound and it may be possible to develop a computerised version in a form which could be taught as part of the school curriculum. The Children's Hospital at Westmead has developed a Video game with the curriculum in mind and this is currently under consideration by the NSW Department of Education. I am aware that Fiona Wood in Perth is also negotiating with the Federal Government for a program promoting first aid and prevention also as part of the school curriculum. I would like to see the formation of a "prevention committee" within ANZBA who would coordinate these various initiatives and involve the JBBT which has also shown, at Peter Maitz's, urging an interest in providing funds and canvassing Federal support in this area.

From the above we can appreciate that there is a great opportunity for ANZBA to take the lead in a number of vital initiatives both locally and Internationally. Despite some really great research around the country we are at present I think too parochial particularly when the

research has political implications. We do not communicate sufficiently with each other across State boundaries, nor at present have we made sufficient use of ANZBA's potential as an institute capable of leading the burns community in National enterprises. If we are to make lasting progress nationally we need to canvass politicians both at State level and Federally, and to do this successfully we need to act in a cooperative and concerted fashion. The State representatives need to do more than simply report at the ASM, they need to be in constant touch with each other, discussing local initiatives and act to find ways in which these might be coordinated and progressed at a National level. The List Serv that has been developed by Tania Healey for Allied Health and by Sheila Kavanagh for Nursing should provide a good avenue for discussion.

In ending, as this is my last report as President, may I take the opportunity to thank the Board and the Membership for your support over the past three years. I would like again to pay particular tribute to Jillian Custance at the secretariat. Jillian with expertise and extensive knowledge of corporate matters steers the ship and keeps us on course. We could not do without her. I would also like to wish the incoming President and the new members of the Board good luck and a firm resolve to promote ANZBA as an organisation which not only represents all burns staff but speaks as a strong and unified voice to improve the care of burns victims and survivors in Australia, and in our region Internationally.

JOHN HARVEY,
President, ANZBA.