



## COSA NEWS **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

*Welcome to the second edition of the Marryalyan for 2009. With our new Executive team now well-established in their roles, COSA's work across the cancer care control spectrum gathers mid-year momentum – in areas where we have long been involved and in a number of emerging fields.*

### **COSA ASM 2009**

Work continues on this year's Annual Scientific Meeting, to be held on the Gold Coast from 15-17 November, with the organisers rising to the ongoing challenge of building on the previous meeting's success.

While continual growth in the scope and attendance of each year's ASM make it harder to yet again raise the bar, we are in good hands with our 2009 Convening committee. In April a sub-committee including Eva Segelov, David Goldstein, Nick Pavlakis, Liz Hovey, Jane Turner and Christine Carrington, coordinated by Marg McJannett, met and produced a program outline that reflects COSA's multidisciplinary membership and ensures the patient experience will be central to the meeting. The plenaries will be a combination of disease-specific sessions on lung and brain cancer, and sessions of broad interest, including prevention and the impact of distance on cancer care.

Cancer research funding is this year's 'Hot Topic Debate', following the great success of our gene patents discussion in 2008.

There will again be a Consumer Day, as well as a number of satellite meetings and Clinical Professional days, a result of COSA's new initiative.

Your attendance and recommendations to colleagues to also participate will help to ensure our ASM remains Australia's premier oncology event.

### **ASM 2010**

Planning has also commenced for our 2010 ASM to be held in Melbourne with a focus on translational research, breast cancer, melanoma, hepatobiliary and pancreatic cancer.



*Professor Bruce Mann, President, COSA*

We have had discussions with various organisations regarding partnering – as we proceed with these discussions, our main goal is to ensure that any arrangements will deliver as much for our members and our organisation as recent COSA ASMs have. We are very pleased to announce that the Australian and New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group (ANZBCTG) will be joining us in 2010.

### **Public policy issues**

COSA has been particularly active in government relations over the past few months. These activities are documented throughout this edition of the *Marryalyan* and summarised here.

#### ■ **Intravenous Chemotherapy Supply Program (ICSP):**

Last year's federal budget foreshadowed the introduction in 2009-10 of the intravenous chemotherapy supply program, a cost-saving measure based on the Government's view that inconsistencies between patient dose and vial size in chemotherapy supply led to a significant component of unused drug being discarded.

The planned measure led to widespread public advocacy from a number of nongovernment groups concerned that patient safety might be compromised,

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costs could be passed to consumers and some established pharmacies could become unviable.

COSA liaised with government and a number of organisations to help ensure that any concerns our members might have had about the new arrangements received due consideration.

- **Regional and Rural Cancer Centres:** After many years of working towards the establishment of regional cancer centres, COSA was delighted to publicly welcome \$560 million in capital grants announced in the 2009-10 budget "for up to 10 centres".

Research, analysis and policy development that COSA has undertaken, including our 2006 mapping report and a more recent analysis of the ideal service mix in a regional cancer centre of excellence, have contributed to the evidence base for this groundbreaking Commonwealth move.

We are now commissioning further research into local community needs that could assist in prioritising capital funding and, in partnership with Cancer Council Australia, are convening a workshop in Canberra on 4 August. The workshop will be attended by a core group of clinicians with experience in regional service delivery, along with Commonwealth and state/territory health department staff and consumer representation. It will deliver a report summarising the independent cancer sector's recommendations on the generic criteria that government should consider when evaluating capital grant applications.

- **COSA & Cancer Cooperative Trial Groups NHMRC Enabling Grant:** Steve Ackland continues to oversee the enabling grant from the NHMRC. Clinical trials insurance has been a major focus, and we were delighted when nine Cancer Cooperative Trial Groups (CCTGs) have agreed to participate in the scheme. The Executive Officers Network (EON) along with the Chairs of the CCTGs have worked long and patiently to get through the complex and lengthy process required to make this happen. The Umbrella scheme should provide a cost-effective, simplified and more streamlined approach to the management of insurance for clinical trials within Australia.

We have recently applied to the NHMRC for a continuation of the Enabling Grant. The overall aim is to continue the process of collaboration across the cooperative trials groups to enhance the capacity of the groups to conduct high quality clinical cancer research. Again a huge amount of work was done to produce a very impressive application. We thank all those who contributed, especially Steve Ackland and Margie Campbell.

### Other Initiatives

All of the COSA interest groups are highly active, working towards a number of key goals; here is just a snapshot of some of the many projects that are underway. For more information, I encourage you to read the interest group reports found in this edition of *Marryalyan*.

- **Tissue Banking** – COSA is attempting to facilitate tissue banking associated with cooperative trials group trials throughout Australia. Nik Zeps and David Goldstein have been working to progress the recommendations of the tissue banking workshop held last year.

A lot of work has been done to define what we can expect to achieve in this area. We have a good understanding of what each of the CCTGs is doing and where the gaps are. We are now preparing to commission an economic study to guide the development of a viable, collaborative solution to maximise the opportunities for cooperative tissue banking from CCTGs – this being a key recommendation from the tissue banking workshop.

- **NETs** – COSA coordinated a workshop in 2008 in association with the ANZ Hepatobiliary Surgery Association, The Australian Society of Nuclear Medicine and the AGITG to discuss the management of Neuroendocrine Tumours in Australia. These are uncommon tumours that have many unusual features such that optimal outcomes require management by dedicated multidisciplinary teams.

We are now planning the next step, which will be the development of Australian guidelines for NET management. While international treatment guidelines are helpful, there are a number of geographic and regulatory issues that mean that Australian guidelines are needed. Yu Jo Chua has been progressing this from a COSA point of view. We intend to convene a meeting in August to formulate draft Australian Guidelines.

- **AYA:** COSA's work in improving cancer care outcomes for adolescent and young adults (AYA) with cancer has gathered momentum, with David Thomas appointed to a national steering committee involved in the allocation of a major Commonwealth AYA cancer initiative.

In the 2007 federal election, both the ALP and the Coalition committed to providing \$15 million towards establishing a network of youth cancer networks. While most of the funds will be allocated to state/territory-based initiatives, a sum will be retained for national projects including the establishment of standards and promotion of clinical trials. David's involvement will help to ensure these funds are allocated on the basis of highest need and in a way consistent with COSA's interest in this area over the past few years.

### Professional Days

The new initiative of COSA Council to sponsor professional days for our groups started this year. We offered grants of up to \$7000 to help COSA groups conduct their group's activities that will promote the aims of COSA. We received 5 strong applications, and the Executive agreed to fund them all. We expect that this initiative will further strengthen the COSA ASM as being the key yearly educational activity for health professionals in the clinical oncology field, and look forward to the reports from the successful groups.

## Strategic Plan

Over the next few months, we will complete the strategic plan for our organisation for the next five years. One of the recommendations of our strategic review was to increase the Executive by two members. So it is with pleasure that I welcome Dr Ian Davis to the Executive. Ian is the Chair of the Urologic Oncology group and I look forward to his contribution to COSA's work.

I wish to acknowledge the work of all of those who contribute to the success and vitality of COSA. Thanks to the staff in Sydney, to the Executive, to the Council and to the members. It is through all our contributions that COSA has become the vital organisation that it is today.

**Professor Bruce Mann**  
**President – COSA**

## VALE – Professor Chris O'Brien AO

3 Jan 1952 – 4 June 2009

Chris O'Brien was a legend in life, and this will not end with his untimely death. A graduate of Sydney University, he trained at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, then undertook specialist training in head and neck surgery in England and the United States before returning to the RPAH staff in 1987. He was instrumental in the development of the Sydney Head and Neck Cancer Institute and established one of the world's leading databases of head and neck cancers, as well as contributing his surgical skills to the Sydney Melanoma Unit. In 2003 Professor O'Brien became Director of the Sydney Cancer Centre at RPAH and the University of Sydney, working to establish it as a leading comprehensive cancer centre while maintaining his clinical work, teaching and research. His many contributions were recognised with the award of an AM in 2005 and an AO, sadly posthumous, in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2009.

All this would be enough for most successful careers. Chris's path took an unexpected turn in November 2006 when he was diagnosed with a high grade malignant brain tumour. Typically, he saw opportunity as well as threat in the illness. Undoubtedly his experience as a patient added depth to his understanding of the cancer journey most doctors merely observe from without. He realised that although the standard of individual specialist care was high, the integration of that care sometimes allowed patients to fall through the cracks between the various disciplines. This underpinned his commitment to a patient-centred approach to cancer care, now realised in the Lifehouse centre at RPAH, which secured substantial government funding in the 2009 Federal Budget and aims to bring all the elements of cancer treatment together within a single facility.

Throughout the demanding course of his illness and its various treatments, Chris maintained extraordinary courage and an unfailing sense of humour, often at his own expense. We have lost a colleague, a mentor and a friend. We extend our condolences to Gail and the family. We will cherish his memory and set about meeting the challenge his legacy has left us.

Provided by Alan Coates AM

## ANNOUNCEMENT: COSA/Roche HOTT Fellowships for 2009

The Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA) is delighted to announce the recipients of this year's COSA/Roche HOTT Fellowships:

**Dr Paul Wood, MB BS, B.Pharm, MSc (Pharmacology), FRACP**, Medical Oncology Trainee, and his submission entitled: *'Molecular analysis and therapeutic targeting of the PI3K/AKT/mTOR pathway in paediatric neuroblastoma'* &

**Dr Daniel Thomas, MB BS, B Med Sci (Hons), FRCPA, FRACP, PhD scholar**, and his submission entitled: *'Osteopontin as a Prognostic Biomarker and Therapeutic Target in Acute Myeloid Leukaemia'*.

Thank you to all members who submitted applications. We look forward to congratulating Paul, Daniel and Genevieve at the COSA ASM in November and hearing more about their research over the coming year.

## ANNOUNCEMENT: COSA/ROCHE HOTTAH GRANT 2009

The Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA) is delighted to announce the recipient of this year's COSA/Roche HOTTAH Grant:

**Dr Genevieve Baratiny, BSc(Hons) PhD(Med) MPHAA**, Research Fellow, with her submission entitled: *'Effectiveness of a DVD-guided pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation tool for post-prostatectomy urinary incontinence – A randomised controlled trial'*.

Competition for the HOTTAH Grant was particularly high this year and we would like to thank all members who submitted applications.

**We thank and acknowledge Roche for continuing to support COSA with the HOTT and HOTTAH grants.**

## ANZCHOG group (ANZ Children's Haematology & Oncology Group)

ANZCHOG held its Annual Scientific Meeting in Glenelg (Adelaide) in early June, attended by more than 200 delegates. As outlined in the last edition of *Marryalyan*, the format of the meeting was altered to provide an integrated program for medical, nursing and allied health representatives, in recognition of the collaborative way in which we work together.

International speakers Professor Vaskar Saha, Head of Cancer Research UK Children's Cancer Group, and Professor Blanche Alter, from the Clinical Genetics Branch of the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics at the US National Cancer Institute, gave informative talks and participated in discussions regarding ALL and BMT, respectively.

Two satellite workshops were held – one on long term effects and survivorship of children with cancer, the other outlining the Comfort First program for management of painful procedures that is in use in Victoria, with the aim of expanding this program nationally. Both workshops attracted a significant number of delegates.

Other highlights included Dr Scott Macfarlane's presentation on the work New Zealand paediatric oncology staff have been doing in Oceania, developing the capacity of hospitals and staff in countries there to better treat paediatric cancer patients; and the four speakers who made presentations in the "Education and Self Care – Survivorship for Professionals" session. Audible gasps of recognition were heard during Dr Peter Winwood's presentation on recognising stress and burnout, Hugh Kearns gave an entertaining and enlightening talk on achieving work/life balance (noting the irony of doing this on the Saturday afternoon of a long weekend), Michael Bull addressed dealing with grief, and Dr Michael Rice gave a moving account of the impact of his career in paediatric oncology on his own life.

Delegates left the meeting with a renewed sense of purpose, as well as having had the opportunity to learn new things and strengthen relationships with colleagues from other states.

Our thanks go to Susan Dyer and Heather Tapp for their hard work in organising the ASM.

In other news, Australian Children's Cancer Trials (ACCT) is progressing well in establishing a program of early phase trials and will commence a new study, "A Phase I Study of LBH589 in Paediatric Patients With Refractory Solid Tumours Including CNS Tumours," which is expected to open in July and will open at all ACCT sites in Australia.

During the ASM, ANZCHOG held its Annual General Meeting, at which members adopted a new constitution, which will enable ANZCHOG to achieve its goals more effectively in the future.

**Peter Downie, Chair**

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## Cancer Nurses Society of Australia

The March to June period is always a very busy time of year for the CNSA as we wind up our financial year and prepare the Annual Report and the AGM for our nurse members, progress the annual process of call for nominations for the National Executive Committee positions, as well as prepare the final touches to Winter Congress.

I am very pleased to say that we have had a very healthy round of nominations for state and territory representatives, and will be holding elections for a few of these. This is a great indication of the support for the Society by its members, and of the community we have built to progress cancer nurse networks and professional support across Australia. We will keep you posted as to the composition of the new Committee.

We have recently experienced a very successful 12th Winter Congress in Newcastle. International keynote speakers this year included Professor Sara Faithful and Nancy Teixeira, and national keynote speakers included Lyndal Moore, Megan Nutt, Beth Ivimey, Keith Cox OAM, Prof Gerry Wain, Kim Hobbs, and many others. The Chair of the Local Organising Committee, Kim Adler, is to be commended, along with her local organising committee and Cath Johnson from the National Executive, for delivering a great meeting. Some notable events from WC include:

- Launch of the CNSA's Position Statement on Tobacco control and smoking cessation, a document led by Julie Clowry of the ACT.
- The inaugural Excellence Award in Cancer Nursing was announced at the conference dinner. We were delighted to make that award to Professor Sanchia Aranda for her exemplary work in clinical, research, educational and academic endeavours in cancer and palliative care nursing practice over her career thus far, in particular her leadership of the EdCaN project.
- The major launch of the EdCaN "National Professional Development Framework for Cancer Nursing" project by Professor David Currow, CEO Cancer Australia, and Dr Ian Roos, Chair of the EdCaN Steering Committee. In addition to the revised Framework, all manner of educational and competency resources were made available to registrants. See [www.edcan.org](http://www.edcan.org) for further detail.

The National Executive Committee of the CNSA will progress the strategic planning process commenced at the beginning of the year and communicate those objectives in more detail over the next few months, to ensure the CNSA's relevance, growth and engagement in cancer control in Australia into the future.

As a member society of the International Society in Cancer Care (ISNCC), the CNSA is involved in planning for the biennial conference in Singapore in March 2010. [www.isncc.org](http://www.isncc.org)

Other key activities the CNSA is involved with include input into the scientific program for COSA's Annual Scientific Meeting on the Gold Coast in November – Chris Long is our CNSA rep on the Organising Committee.

See the CNSA July Newsletter on our website for a more detailed wrap up of the activities of the CNSA.

**Gabriel Prest, Chair**

Email: [gprest@nursing.edu.au](mailto:gprest@nursing.edu.au)

## Cancer Pharmacists group

### Membership

Welcome to all our new members and thanks to those ongoing members for your continued support for the CPG and COSA. Our group membership is now at 81 pharmacists which is a record high and clearly demonstrates the benefits people can see in becoming a member of the group. Please continue to encourage other pharmacists to join.



## ASM 2009

The COSA ASM 2009 is on November 17th -19th at the Gold Coast Convention Centre, Queensland. The tumour focus this year is on lung and CNS malignancies (both primary and secondary) and an overall theme of 'Awareness, Action and Access' in relation to cancer and related services. I am pleased to announce that Dermot Ball a cancer pharmacist from the UK will be our international pharmacy speaker. Dermot is a Cancer Network Pharmacist for the North London Cancer Network in the UK and is currently also working with the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) as the Chemotherapy Safety Project Pharmacist. He was a member of the expert advisory panel for the NCEPOD (National Patient Enquiry into Patient Outcomes & Death) report on deaths that occurred within 30 days of chemotherapy. Dermot has also been leading the update on the general guidance for oncology drugs within the British National Formulary (BNF). Dermot will be speaking at the first plenary session at the ASM on safety in cancer and will also be talking in the concurrent sessions. The CPG are organising 2 sessions; a therapeutic session which will include some recent advances in personalising cancer therapy and a safety session called 'protecting yourself, protecting the patient' which will focus on safety issues in clinical practice.

Contributed papers for both oral and poster presentations will again be themed, please give some thought to submitting an abstract, there is plenty of time before the deadline and there will be plenty of prizes on offer once again. Deadlines are:

Oral abstract submissions **Friday 7 August 2009**

Early bird registrations **Friday 28 August 2009**

## COSA Member benefits

**Your membership to COSA entitles you to a free subscription to the**

Asia-Pacific Journal of  
**Clinical Oncology**

APJCO is an important vehicle for the collaboration and exchanging of information on key issues and developments in the Asia-Pacific region on all aspects of cancer treatment and care.

Any COSA members not receiving copies should contact the Society at [cosa@cancer.org.au](mailto:cosa@cancer.org.au).



## The CPG course 'Clinical Skills for Cancer Pharmacy Practitioners' Brisbane 2009

The first CPG course 'The 'Clinical Skills for Cancer Pharmacy Practitioners' was held in Brisbane on the 2nd and 3rd May 2009. The course was a great success and fully booked with 60 attendees and 6 speakers nationally. Feedback has been excellent and the course will be repeated as we have a number of people on our waiting list. We are currently looking at a September date for the next one and then again in February next year. In addition we are looking to develop the idea of an advanced level course to meet the needs of our membership, to be held next year.

I would like to thank all the speakers for their hard work over that weekend – Jim Siderov, Ben Stevenson, Lesley Dawson, Dan Mellor, Gail Rowan (and myself). I would also like to thank all the CPG members who attended or sent their staff to the course. A more detailed report is available on the COSA website and in this edition of the Marryalyan. Further detail of the program is available on the 'continuing professional development and education' resource section of the CPG area of the website. If you or your staff would like to register your interest in attending the next course or other courses we are running please email me at [christine\\_carrington@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:christine_carrington@health.qld.gov.au)

### Occupational exposure to cytotoxic chemotherapy and monoclonal antibodies

The CPG (led by Jim Siderov) are in the process of seeking advice from Cancer Council Australia on the risks associated with occupational exposure to antineoplastic agents and monoclonal antibodies. As discussed at the AGM 2008 there have been concerns raised about occupational exposure resulting from surface contamination of cytotoxic agents in pharmacy departments following recent Australian studies and the issue of who should be preparing monoclonal and what the risks are to operators is still unclear. We will inform all members when we receive some advice.

### Etoposide

The study to support the standardisation of the prescribing, dispensing and labelling of etoposide formulations has been completed. The report is being finalised and will contain multi-disciplinary recommendation on the prescribing, supply and labelling of etoposide. The report and guidance will be presented at COSA 2009.

### Guidelines for the Prescribing, Dispensing & Administration of Chemotherapy

A copy of the guidelines is available to members and non members on the front page of the COSA website as a PDF document. A copy will also be hosted on the new NSW Cancer Institute Standard Cancer Treatments website 'eviQ' to be launched in August.

### The website

The website content is under review and some changes have been made. Please continue with suggestions for items that you think should be there. There are some good discussion threads happening so please continue to use the discussion forum. I encourage you to regularly check the forum for information. This is where we post updates and information about areas of interest and current developments

## The Intravenous Chemotherapy Supply program (ICSP) and new PBS rules

COSA and the CPG continue to consult with the DoHA to discuss the new arrangements with the most recent meeting held at the end of May. A position statement for the Combined Professional Groups comprising the Clinical Oncological Society of

Australia (COSA), the Medical Oncology Group of Australia (MOGA), the Haematology Society of Australia & New Zealand (HSANZ) and the Private Cancer Physicians of Australia (PCPA) has been prepared and circulated to all members along with a summary of the recent discussions. If you have not received a copy or would like more information on what has been happening please contact me.

## Report for COSA: Clinical Skills for Cancer Pharmacy Practitioners Course

The first CPG 'Clinical Skills for Cancer Pharmacy Practitioners' course, organised by the Cancer Pharmacist Group (CPG) of Australia, was held on the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd May 2009.

The course was fully booked with 60 attendees across Australia and 6 speakers. It combined informative lectures with interactive workshops to enable pharmacists to enhance their clinical skills and abilities in the many processes involved in providing cancer treatment to our patients. Topics on day 1 were themed into cancer therapy in clinical practice sessions which included the

*Principles of Chemotherapy & Targeted Therapy, the Common Side Effects of Chemotherapy & Targeted Therapy, the Management of these Side Effects and Understanding Chemotherapy Protocols.* Pre reading was also provided to participants as a background to cancer and its treatment and the pharmacology of chemotherapy and targeted therapy. Day 2 consisted of interactive workshops on lymphoma, colorectal cancer and breast cancer with case studies used to direct key learning points around the management and treatment of these tumour groups. The attendees were encouraged to actively participate in all discussions and workshops. A welcome reception was held on the first day to enable participants, speakers and sponsor representatives to meet, network and relax. This was extremely well attended by the many participants and proved to be an enjoyable evening.

Throughout the course attendees were given presentations and guidance from experienced cancer pharmacists. The speakers were; Christine Carrington (Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, Queensland), Jim Siderov (Austin Health, Melbourne, Victoria), Ben Stevenson (APHS Pharmacy, Adelaide, South Australia), Lesley Dawson (Mater Health Services, Brisbane, Queensland), Gail Rowan (Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne, Victoria), Dan Mellor (Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne, Victoria). These pharmacists were chosen for their vast knowledge and experience in the area of cancer pharmacy practice and their skills and ability at teaching and running workshops.

## Clinical Skills for Cancer Pharmacy Practitioners PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

Saturday 2nd May		
8.45am	<b>Introduction to the course and the role of the pharmacist in providing cancer services</b>	Christine Carrington Ben Stevenson
9.40am	<b>Cancer Therapy in Clinical Practice Session 1</b> Principles of chemotherapy and targeted therapy	Jim Siderov
10.10am	Morning Break	
10.30am	<b>Cancer Therapy in Clinical Practice Session 2</b> Side effects of therapy	Dan Mellor
11.10am	<b>Cancer Therapy in Clinical Practice Session 3</b> Common side effects of chemotherapy and the management of these side effects	Lesley Dawson Gail Rowan
12.25am	Lunch Break	
1.10pm	<b>Cancer Therapy in Clinical Practice Session 3 contd.</b>	Jim Siderov
1.55pm	<b>Cancer Therapy in Clinical Practice Session 4</b> Common side effects of targeted therapy and management of these side effects	Dan Mellor
2.40pm	Afternoon Break	
3.00pm	<b>Cancer Therapy in Clinical Practice Session 5</b> Understanding a chemotherapy protocol	Gail Rowan Lesley Dawson
4.05pm	Summary of day	Christine Carrington
5.00pm	Welcome Reception	

Sunday 3rd May		
9.00am	<b>Management and treatment of individual cancers</b> Interactive Workshops – Breast Cancer – Colorectal Cancer – Lymphoma Includes Morning Break 10.00 – 10.20 am	Lesley Dawson Gail Rowan Jim Siderov
12.30pm	End of course	



An exceptional total of 53 course evaluation forms were returned, enabling the CPG to accurately assess the benefits and relevance of the course. The overall course and the individual sessions were all rated as very good to excellent. The majority of participants agreed that the content of the course contributed to their continued professional development, was relevant to their current practice and would recommend the course to colleagues and staff. Suggestions were made on future courses which included extending the duration of the course to include more topics and running a course aimed at more experienced pharmacists. All materials and presentations for the course were supplied prior to the course on a USB memory stick to enable participants to either print copies of the presentations or view electronically. This proved to be a valuable method of disseminating the course materials as both a cost saving and as an 'environmentally friendly initiative'. Following this success the CPG are planning to run this course as a regular event and are planning further advanced courses in the area of cancer pharmacy practice. The CPG would also like to express our thanks to all our industry sponsors who contributed to the sponsorship of this event; Roche, Amgen, Eli Lilly, GSK, APHS, Baxter, Pfizer, Sanofi Aventis and Hospira. A more detailed version of the course program can be found on the COSA website within the Cancer Pharmacists group webpage section on continuing professional development and education.

**Christine Carrington, Chair**

Email: [christine\\_carrington@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:christine_carrington@health.qld.gov.au)

## Cancer Research group

It cannot be emphasised enough how important biological/translational substudies are for drug trials, especially with the increased move towards developing and using targeted therapies. Nevertheless, there is a significant gap in Australia in coordinating and conducting the collection of samples from trials undertaken by the Cooperative Cancer Clinical Trials Groups (CCTGs). The wealth of clinical data that can be linked with these biospecimens adds to the importance of this source of tissue for biological studies.

As such, our main activity has been the further development of the work begun last year – to explore how COSA may facilitate the collection of, and access to, biospecimens collected by the CCTGs.

We have been fortunate to receive substantial funding from Roche as well as funding from Novartis for this work in the form of untied grants.

COSA has appointed Deloitte as the health economic consultancy group who will undertake a part of the necessary stakeholder engagement and the development of an issues and a discussion paper outlining potential solutions for biobanking from clinical trials. We expect a report to be available in November, which will provide a summary of the recommendations and the role COSA will likely play, as well as guidance on how to fund the next steps. The coming months are going to be an exciting period as we drive this project forward.

**Nik Zeps, Chair**

Email: [nik.zeps@sjog.org.au](mailto:nik.zeps@sjog.org.au)

## Clinical Research Professionals group

### ASM

Prior to the ASM this year, on Monday 16 November 2009 we will be running a **Professional Development Day** in collaboration with the Enabling Grant. It will be run as a workshop – so apply for your study leave and funding now! The program is being finalized at the time of *Marryalyan* going to print so please see program in the coming weeks for more information; [http://www.asnevents.com.au/cosa/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=46](http://www.asnevents.com.au/cosa/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29&Itemid=46)

### Professional Development

Have you considered joining the Clinical Research Professionals of COSA? Why not consider joining the executive committee in 2010? It is an opportunity to network nationally with other research professionals as well as to raise the profile of Clinical Research at a National level. If you are interested, please email [Cate.O'Kane@mcri.edu.au](mailto:Cate.O'Kane@mcri.edu.au) for more information.

### News

*NHMRC Australian Health Ethics Committee (AHEC) Position Statement: Monitoring and reporting of safety for clinical trials involving therapeutic products* was released in May 2009. [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health\\_ethics/hrecs/reference/\\_files/090609\\_nhmrc\\_position\\_statement.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health_ethics/hrecs/reference/_files/090609_nhmrc_position_statement.pdf)

This Position Statement is designed to clarify the responsibilities of all parties in relation to reports of adverse events (AEs), including serious adverse events (SAEs) and suspected unexpected serious adverse reactions (SUSARs), occurring in clinical trials for which institutions are responsible and that Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) have reviewed and given ethical approval. It is anticipated that this updated position statement will improve the process of safety reporting for Investigators. Investigators must still submit progress reports of the trial status to the IRB/IEC. This Position Statement specifies **minimum requirements** regarding safety reporting in order to comply with the National Statement. Depending on the complexity, design and risk perceived, an institution and/or the HREC responsible for the trial may require that additional information be reported. However, as far as possible, a uniform approach across trials in Australia is desirable so that investigators and sponsors are able to meet these obligations.

**Cate O'Kane, Chair**

Email: [cateok@yahoo.com](mailto:cateok@yahoo.com)



## Familial Cancer group

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On August 11th the Familial Cancer group will hold its annual educational meeting at the Mantra Resort, Salt Beach, Queensland. This will be followed by the KConFab Annual Meeting, "Familial Aspects of Cancer, Research and Practice". The finalized program for the Family Cancer Clinics day includes sessions on chemoprevention of breast cancer in at risk women, results from the IMPACT study examining prostate cancer risk reducing strategies for men with BRCA mutations, an update on PARP inhibitors in BRCA carriers, familial hyperparathyroidism and Von Hippel Lindau Syndrome. The meeting attracts clinicians, scientists and counselors with an interest in familial cancer from throughout Australia and a panel of international experts.

Much interest has been generated in the media recently by controversy over patenting of gene tests and by the potential for discrimination based on genetic testing. A senate inquiry into gene patents has recently closed to submissions. A joint submission was submitted by the Cancer Council Australia and COSA and can be viewed at [http://www.cancer.org.au/File/PolicyPublications/Submissions/Senate\\_inquiry\\_into\\_gene\\_patents-submission\\_from\\_Cancer\\_Council\\_Australia,COSA.pdf](http://www.cancer.org.au/File/PolicyPublications/Submissions/Senate_inquiry_into_gene_patents-submission_from_Cancer_Council_Australia,COSA.pdf). At present no patents for genetic testing are being imposed within Australia. Whilst the potential exists for discrimination in life and income protection insurance for cancer predisposing mutation carriers, it does not appear to be a common event. For more information see Med J Aust. 2003 Nov 3;179(9):480-3. Implications for insurance are discussed with all persons prior to obtaining consent for genetic testing.

Research within Australian Familial Cancer Clinics continues a strong theme with wide participation in trials such as KConFab which seeks to map new predisposition genes in breast cancer families, IMPACT, a study in men carrying BRCA mutations, the Colon Cancer Family Register and studies assessing MRI in breast screening, PARPi in ovarian cancer and MRI for HNPCC screening.

**Lara Lipton, Chair**

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## Gynaecology group

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ANZGOG has had an exciting and innovative year, with two home-grown trials getting off the ground and a number of new international trials getting underway.

ANZGOG has successfully collaborated with the Psycho-Oncology Cooperative group on a "symptom benefit" study which has been approved as a Gynaecological Cancer Intergroup collaboration with the first stage of the trial being conducted in two Canadian sites and 5 sites in the New South Wales. The sites are about to be expanded nationally.

Tripod 3 is the other ANZGOG developed study which is investigating the feasibility and safety of administering chemotherapy intra-peritoneally. So far the study has recruited 31 patients from 13 centres and will continue recruitment until the end of the year following an interim analysis showing no unexpected adverse events.

Funding for the symptom benefit study has been achieved through the NHMRC as has PORTEC 3 which is a study of high-risk endometrial cancer using chemoradiation followed by 4 cycles of chemotherapy. 17 sites in Australia and New Zealand are participating in this trial and recruitment is on target. 6 trials are closed to recruitment including ICON-7, SCOTROC 4, TARCEVA, CALYPSO and GOG studies 182 and 199.

ANZGOG is also collaborating with the ANZ germ cell trial group on an accelerated BET study.

ANZGOG has also closely collaborated with the Psycho-Oncology group on website development resulting in the development of an electronic bulletin board.

Seven new concepts were submitted to the 2009 ANZGOG Annual Scientific Meeting and five of these were recommended for further development.

Two of our members have recently attended a "State of the Science" meeting in Manchester on cervical cancer and it is hoped that a new trial of adjuvant combination chemotherapy in advanced cervical cancer will be adopted by the Intergroup as a Co-operative International Trial.

The next meeting of ANZGOG will take place in Queensland at the COSA meeting and it is hoped that as many members as possible attend this meeting and provide input to ensure the growth of gynaecological cancer trials within Australia.

**Michael Quinn, Chair**

Email: [maquinn@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:maquinn@unimelb.edu.au)

## Lung group

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The Lung Cancer group continues to make slow progress.

The COSA 2009 Annual Scientific meeting is hoped to be a turning point in the COSA Lung group's history as the focus is on Lung Cancer (and Brain Cancer).

ASCO 2009 saw a number of key presentations that prove principle for the concept of "maintenance" therapy of patients with metastatic NSCLC, in delaying tumour progression after first line chemotherapy - pemetrexed in adenocarcinomas, avastin/tarceva in non-squamous cancers, and tarceva in unselected patients. Obviously further peer review, publication and the presentation of cost-effectiveness data will ultimately determine the approval of these agents in practice.

Perhaps it is time for an increased public voice in support of the treatment of lung cancer not just government funded advertisements focusing on its prevention through smoking cessation – important but not helping those who get the disease!

**Nick Pavlakis, Chair**

Email: [pavlakis@med.usyd.edu.au](mailto:pavlakis@med.usyd.edu.au)

## Medical Oncology group

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It has been another busy 3 months at MOGA full of diverse, productive and exciting work. The beginning of the year saw us welcoming new trainees who by April had a chance to come together at the inaugural Basic Science of Oncology Weekend. This event sponsored by an unrestricted educational grant from GSK brought together trainees with experts in diverse disciplines from pathology, genetics, pharmacology and immunology with didactic session interspersed with networking of trainees from across the country. We have received very positive feedback and hope to run the program on the yearly basis to complement other educational events for trainees including ACORD and communication skills training program.

With the established oncologists in mind we have commenced the workforce survey which will inform the workforce planning in medical oncology by providing a detailed snapshot of workforce supply and demand across the country. We urge our members to assist



MOGA in compiling accurate information by responding to the brief survey either on line or via hard copy as it will assist us in lobbying the government for workforce support and development of agreed workload standards similar to what has been achieved in radiation oncology.

Drug advocacy kept us busy with a development of a working paper on rational use of trastuzumab in management of patients with advanced HER - 2 positive breast cancer, advice regarding listing of goserolin for early stage breast cancer and development of a joint positions statement with COSA and Private Cancer Physicians of Australia on Intravenous Chemotherapy Supply Program. We have subsequently met with the representatives of the Department of Health to discuss this issue in more detail and will monitor the proposed changes and review them at the Annual Drug Round table meeting in November. As I write these comments, the third Horizon Scanning report on emerging cancer treatments is being drafted to be tabled at the same meeting.

In May, MOGA and COSA jointly ran a rural oncology workshop at the Rural Cancer Conference in Cairns. The workshop coincided with the finalisation of the EPICC – the Education Program in Cancer Care – a multidisciplinary educational initiative led by MOGA with support from Cancer Australia that is aimed at providing educational resources to non cancer specialists especially in rural and remote locations. The workshop provided valuable feedback on the program which will be launched in August at the MOGA Annual Scientific Meeting in Canberra in August.

The preparations for our 30 anniversary Annual Scientific meeting are well underway and with the theme The Epidemiology of Cancer; from cause to care and an outstanding panel of invited speakers. The meeting will be followed by the inaugural Best of ASCO Session – free to MOGA members, which will provide a summary of key presentations from ASCO 2009 that may be of interest to medical oncologists and other cancer care providers alike.

Hope to see you all in Canberra!

**Bogda Koczwarra, Chair**

Email: [bogda.koczwarra@flinders.edu.au](mailto:bogda.koczwarra@flinders.edu.au)

## Neuro-Oncology group

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The 2009 COSA Gold Coast ASM programme has taken shape. Brain tumours are to be highlighted and will be a feature of the entire programme. We have confirmed our international speakers - Swiss medical oncologist Roger Stupp (of Stupp protocol fame) and radiation oncologist Normand Laperriere from Canada. Tuesday 17th November will include a session on dealing with patients who pose cognitive and behavioural challenges as well as a session updating on whether there is in fact a link between mobile phones and brain tumours. Wednesday 18th November programme will be emphasising cerebral metastases; spinal cord metastases and paediatric/adolescent and more uncommon primary brain tumours. Thursday 19th November programme will include a plenary session on gliomas; as well as an opportunity to hear local neuro-oncology research updates. There will be the COGNO satellite meeting (& 2nd ASM) on the Friday 20th November. It is likely there will also be a symposium on Thursday afternoon highlighting surgical and imaging advances in the glioma field which will include another international guest, Dr La Rocca from the USA. Please submit

abstracts by August 7th to COSA. Don't forget to encourage your trainees to also join COSA as financial members so they can be eligible for Merit Awards for potential poster and oral presentations as well as a discounted registration fee (along with multiple other subscription benefits).

The National Consensus Guidelines for the Management of Astrocytomas and Oligodendrogliomas in Adults will be officially launched at the COSA Gold Coast ASM. In the interim, the draft version is available for perusal on [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au) (click onto clinical guidelines, then onto brain tumours); alternatively the full link is <http://www.cancer.org.au/Healthprofessionals/clinicalguidelines/braintumours.htm>

The Australian contingent was well represented at the recent World Federation of Neuro-Oncology Conference held in Yokohama, Japan in May, with a number of basic science and clinical oral and poster presentations. This included 4 separate presentations (regarding different aspects of the study) made regarding “A multi-tiered intervention study for patients, carers and health providers to address challenging behaviours after brain tumours” presented by Dr Eng-Siew Koh on behalf of all the Liverpool Hospital and RNSH investigators involved. Dr Kerrie McDonald, a well known local neuro-oncology scientist from Sydney's Kolling Institute was one of the merit award recipients at the Hoshino Award Ceremony. Congratulations to the other presenters (including Lawrence Cher, Bryan Day, Terrance Johns and IBTA's Denis Strangman).

Our close affiliate research group COGNO (Co-operative Trial Group for Neuro-Oncology) has completed recruitment of its first study (TMZ + Caelyx up-front in GBM) and data is currently being analysed. The EORTC/TROG/COGNO Low-grade Glioma study is up & running. The EORTC/TROG/COGNO “Glioblastoma and The Elderly” study is about to start. Likewise, COGNO will be working alongside EORTC for the CATNON study (which looks at a cross-over design of a modified Stupp protocol approach up-front for patients with anaplastic astrocytoma without 1p and 19q deletion), hopefully opening towards the end of 2009. If you want to become a member of COGNO or for other information, please contact [cogno@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto:cogno@ctc.usyd.edu.au).

Looking forward to seeing you all later in the year. The Gold Coast meeting is not to be missed.

**Liz Hovey, Chair**

Email: [Elizabeth.Hovey@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Elizabeth.Hovey@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

## Palliative Care group

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The remainder of 2009 brings several conferences of interest to the palliative care community, and those within cancer care who look after those with advanced illness.

The Inaugural Whole Person Care National Symposium: “Responding to the challenge of whole person care in clinical practice” will be held on October 30 – 31 2009, Swiss Grand Bondi Beach, Sydney. International speakers include Professor Harvey Chochinov and Dr Thomas Egnew, with topics exploring hope and suffering, dignity conserving care, meaning making, burnout and clinician self care. The conference is for any health professional who cares for people with life limiting illness. Further information is available by email: [wholeperson@iceaustralia.com](mailto:wholeperson@iceaustralia.com) or phone: 02 8282 0544. The 10th Australian Palliative Care conference combined with the 8th Asia Pacific Hospice

Palliative Care Network conference will occur in Perth between September 24th – 27th, with the theme “Cultural connections for quality care at the end of life”. Further information is available at <http://www.conlog.com.au/palliativecare2009/>

Palliative Care Week in May 2009 saw many events across the country highlighting the importance of Palliative and end of life care. Palliative Care Australia has also recently released a publication *End of life: towards quality care at the end of life* identifying particular aspects to focus our improvements in end of life care. More details are available from the Palliative Care Australia website: [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au)

We continue to welcome ideas and suggestions for further development of the Palliative Care group within COSA.

**Meera Agar, Chair**

Email: [meera.agar@sswhs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:meera.agar@sswhs.nsw.gov.au)

## Psycho-Oncology group

### Professional Day

The Psychosocial group's joint application with PoCoG to COSA for financial support for a Professional Day was successful, and we are grateful to the COSA Executive for this initiative.

The Professional Day will be held on Monday 16 November 2009, at the Gold Coast Convention Centre prior to the COSA Annual Scientific Meeting on the Gold Coast.

The day aims to bring together researchers and clinicians working in the field of psycho-oncology to consider initiatives to promote quality cancer care and to share ideas so that research is clinically meaningful. It will also provide an opportunity for clinicians to gain access to innovative research ideas.

The program of the day will include a plenary presentation by Professor Barry Bultz (Canada), clinical workshops, panel discussions, concurrent presentations and a launch of a new PoCoG database of psychological measures.

**Who can attend?** We welcome registrations from all members of OZPOS, PoCoG and all COSA members. We especially encourage members to attend both the Professional Day and the COSA ASM.

**What is the cost?** This satellite event to the COSA ASM is jointly funded by Cancer Australia and COSA. Registration is free to all members of OZPOS and PoCoG. Travel and accommodation costs will not be covered, however PoCoG members are encouraged to seek funding through round 3 of the PoCoG Travel Reimbursement Scheme, which will open in September 2009. COSA members have access to COSA Travel Grants.

### Outstanding achievements

Our warm congratulations to Professor Phyllis Butow who has received the International Psycho-Oncology Society (IPOS) Bernard Fox Memorial Award. The award was established to honour an IPOS or community member who has made an outstanding contribution in education, research or leadership to the field of psycho-oncology.

Professor Butow is Chair of the Psycho-oncology Co-operative Research Group (PoCoG) and co-director and NHMRC Principle Research Fellow of the Centre for Medical Psychology and Evidence-based Decision-making (CeMPED), The University of Sydney. Professor Butow will receive the award during the IPOS 11th World Congress of Psycho-Oncology, which will be held

in Vienna, Austria, 21 – 25 June 2009.

Heartly congratulations are also extended to Professor Kate White, Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Sydney, on her new appointment as the First Academic Chair in Cancer Nursing for NSW.

This appointment recognises the vital role of specialist nurses in cancer treatment. Professor White will provide leadership in areas of cancer nursing research, education, models of service provision and have a statewide influence on strategies for optimising cancer nursing services.

### Research

PoCoG's Concept Development Workshop in November 2008 resulted in the development of four projects. The themes of the four projects are:

- Fear of recurrence in cancer survivors
- Sleep disturbance
- Supporting patients with a poor prognosis
- Head & neck cancer – an intervention to improve psychosocial outcomes.

Working groups were formed by the workshop participants who expressed interest in being involved in these projects. PoCoG is fostering the development of these projects to funding stage by supporting the interest groups in various ways such as facilitating group meetings and teleconferences, providing administrative support, assisting with literature reviews and assisting with pilot projects.

The interest groups comprise writing teams headed by the nominated project leader, who are responsible for preparing the protocol and detailed research plan for funding applications and a wider membership of interested researchers and clinicians who expressed interest in being involved in the projects' rolling out phase.

PoCoG members are invited to join the interest groups. Interested members should contact the PoCoG Executive Officer Ms Monika Dzidowska by email at [monikad@psych.usyd.edu.au](mailto:monikad@psych.usyd.edu.au)

### Large Print Question Prompt Lists (QPLs)

To support vision impaired cancer patients, the Cancer Institute NSW has made large print versions of the following question prompt lists available on the Cancer Institute NSW website:

- Questions to ask your medical/radiation oncologist
- Questions to ask your surgeon
- Questions to ask your haematologist

These QPL pamphlets were developed by the Centre for Medical Psychology and Evidence-based Decision-making (CeMPED) at the University of Sydney with funding from the Cancer Institute NSW.

A fourth edition to the series on complementary therapies has been added, developed in collaboration with the Cancer Council NSW. It is called:

- Questions to ask about complementary therapies

Plans are now underway to develop a large print version of the Complementary Therapy pamphlet.

Patients are encouraged to use the evidence based QPLs as a communication-aid, supporting patients to ask questions that they may not have previously thought of, or have felt embarrassed to ask. Patient benefits associated with QPL use include reduced anxiety and enhanced information recall.

Electronic copies of the QPLs are available at:  
[http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au/cancer\\_inst/patients/questions.html](http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au/cancer_inst/patients/questions.html)

### Scientific Meetings

- **IPOS Congress:** Several members will be attending the International Psycho-Oncology Society (IPOS) Meeting in Vienna. This is an important meeting as IPOS has recently moved to become a Federation of which OZPOS will be inducted as a member at this meeting. The obvious advantages of having a formal affiliation with an international Federation include access to educational resources, potential for clinical and research collaborations, and the potential to engage in advocacy for enhanced status and funding for psychosocial care of patients with cancer.

This meeting includes a symposium on Clinical Practice Guidelines in which I will be presenting on the NBOCC/NCCI Psychosocial Guidelines. This represents a unique opportunity to liaise with health professionals to discuss issues relating to implementation and the complex issue of evaluation of Clinical Practice Guidelines.

- **COSA ASM:** All members are strongly encouraged to attend the ASM in November at the Gold Coast. The program is in the final stages of preparation and as for the meeting in Sydney there has been an effort to develop integrated sessions of interest to all members of COSA. The theme of Brain and Lung are important in terms of the psychosocial needs of patients, families and carers, and there will be high quality psychosocial presentations around these themes.

**Jane Turner, Chair**

Email: [jane.turner@uq.edu.au](mailto:jane.turner@uq.edu.au)

### Radiation Oncology group

Things continue to progress well in regards to the COSA Annual Scientific Meeting on the Gold Coast later this year.

In addition to this meeting there are several other important meetings that are coming up in the near future which are of interest to the group.

The annual TROG Trials Review meeting will be held from 10 -11th September 2009 at the Stamford Plaza, Brisbane. This meeting is mainly for TROG Trials Investigators to report on the progress of their trial(s), however there are limited spaces for non-trial investigators to attend at no cost. In addition a Quality of Life Workshop for TROG investigators will be held on the first day facilitated by Professor Madeleine King from PoCoG. Further information can be found at <http://www.trog.com.au>.

Early bird registrations are now available for the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists 2009 Annual Meeting to be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre 22-25 October. Dr Brigid Hickey is the Convenor of the Radiation Oncology Programme. An exciting and innovative program from high profile international and national speakers and at times across six concurrent sessions has been created. The Combined Scientific meeting has been planned around a theme of 'Collaboration: Working and Learning Together' to facilitate a better understanding of the various roles of the professions working in radiology and radiation therapy treatment services and to provide a multidisciplinary education environment. Visit [www.csm2009.com](http://www.csm2009.com)

Finally, this year's Australian Sarcoma Group meeting will also be held in Brisbane from the 17-18th October at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane. The meeting has 3 invited speakers from overseas, Professors Jay Wunder, Brian O'Sullivan and Paolo Dei Tos. For further information contact [Sally.Whyte@petermac.org](mailto:Sally.Whyte@petermac.org)

Feel free to forward me any information that you think may be of interest to the group that could be published in the next newsletter.

**Sandro Porceddu, Chair**

Email: [sandro\\_porceddu@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:sandro_porceddu@health.qld.gov.au)

### Regional & Rural group

It has certainly been a busy few months. Most activity has centred around the Regional Cancer Centres of Excellence Program and the recent news that a substantial amount of money has been dedicated towards this project.

In mid May I had the opportunity to attend the National Rural Health Alliance meeting in Cairns. COSA was invited along with MOGA to run a cancer stream over 2 days. I'd like to thank Margaret McJannett and the COSA Executive for their help in putting together the stream. I had the opportunity to present what COSA felt were the main components of the Regional Cancer Centres of Excellence. Sabe Sabesan presented his experience with remote clinic teleconferencing. David Goldstein presented on burn-out amongst cancer workers, and Patsy Yates and Bogda Koczwara on education programs. Kevin Comlossy from MOGA and Bogda Koczwara also launched the EPIC Education Program. This is a collaborative between MOGA and Cancer Australia. The audience was a reasonable size but certainly provided useful feedback. EPIC will be an excellent program to help improve cancer care education for general practitioners. The NRHA was a good forum to attend however none of the recommendations were taken forward by the organisation. The event was probably somewhat overshadowed by the recent federal budget funding announcement for regional cancer centres.

With regards to the federal budget announcement, \$560 million has been allocated to development of at least 10 regional cancer centres of excellence. This announcement certainly came as a very pleasant surprise and is most welcome. The money allocated appears to be for capital works programs only. As yet, no firm plan exists on how to implement this or on the tendering process. COSA is certainly working hard to try and determine the best way for the funds to be allocated. The COSA document clearly states the need for such centres to be established (or expanded). However, more than capital expenditure needs to be considered. These centres need appropriate multidisciplinary staffing to ensure they can provide their intended service.

In an attempt to discuss this further and ensure that appropriate centres can equitably submit tenders for these grants, COSA is to hold a workshop in Canberra in early August. Once more, information is available and this will be forwarded to members.

It is clearly not possible for every regional cancer centre to develop a Regional Cancer Centre of Excellence but I think that the process should act as a challenge for us to look at novel ways of improving the way we deliver cancer services to rural and regional Australia. I look forward to any comments.

**Adam Boyce, Chair**

Email: [drboyce@bigpond.net.au](mailto:drboyce@bigpond.net.au)



## Social Work group

Oncology Social Workers group is busy looking forward to an exciting conference at the end of the year. We were successful in our application for a COSA grant which will assist in our efforts to have a clinical professional day following the COSA ASM in November. There has been much work done in the COSA ASM planning and the program is shaping up quite well, apart from the opportunity for gaining of knowledge and education about treatment regimes, diagnosis and up to date research and evidence, what will appeal to social workers in particular is the strong addition across the program of psychosocial input. We have a fantastic opportunity to hear from Carolyn Messner who is a clinical social worker from USA as well as Barry Bultz who works in psycho-oncology.

Across the country there are ongoing research projects that are unfolding, there are some very exciting intervention based research happening in Victoria, as well as international collaborations. Qld and WA have lodged a funding application and are waiting to hear back. Meanwhile there has been more interest in the post-graduate social work course through Melbourne University.

The OSWA website is up and running. It looks fantastic and is a great forum for national communication and networking. Come and have a look [www.oswa.net.au](http://www.oswa.net.au) The state groups continue to provide local opportunity for ongoing education and networking. It seems that the year just gets busier, with work loads increasing and people trying to fine tune to the balance of work and personal life. This second half of the year looks promising with some wonderful conferences happening and opportunities for contributing to practice, research and policy in cancer care. I encourage the membership to have a look at the COSA conference website, and to consider submitting an abstract when they register for the conference and look forward to seeing you there. As always we are happy to hear from people wanting to participate or who would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me on:  
[angela.cotroneo@email.cs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:angela.cotroneo@email.cs.nsw.gov.au).

**Angela Cotroneo, Chair**

Email: [angela.cotroneo@email.cs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:angela.cotroneo@email.cs.nsw.gov.au)

## Surgical Oncology group

The RACS Surgical Oncology Group had a very successful meeting at the RACS ASC in May. We were privileged to have two superb visitors, Dan Coit and John Thompson.

Adelaide is hosting the 43rd World Congress of Surgery/ International Society of Surgery meeting 7-12 September. The RACS Surgical Oncology group in conjunction with GSA will be running a session on 'Melanoma – post the Guidelines' on Thursday 10 September. The program features an exciting range of experts from a large number of international societies and has a strong focus on breast, endocrine and digestive cancers.

ANZHPBA and ANZGOSA will have a combined meeting in Queenstown, NZ in September 2010. The theme will be Biliary malignancy. More information is expected out soon.

The upcoming COSA ASM in November on the Gold Coast has an exciting focus on CNS and lung cancer. From a surgical perspective one of the key visitors will be Professor Bernard Park from the Memorial Sloan

Kettering Cancer Center, who brings a wealth of clinical and research experience particularly in the field of minimal access lung surgery and the management of thyroid and thymic disease.

**Susan Neuhaus, Chair**

Email: [susan\\_neuhaus@hotmail.com](mailto:susan_neuhaus@hotmail.com)

## Urologic Oncology group

The executive of the group has been meeting informally and there has not been any formal activity of the broader group since the COSA 2008 ASM. In the last Marryalyan I reported that David Nicol had replaced Raji Kooner as deputy chair; unfortunately David is no longer able to fill this role and we are pleased to welcome Shomik Sengupta in his place. Scott Williams continues as secretary. This means that all of the current executive members happen to be based in Victoria but I assure you that this is entirely coincidental and is not any sort of political message! Considering the whole swine flu thing, perhaps this sort of containment approach might become necessary anyway.

COSA is pleased and proud to collaborate with sanofi-aventis and support a novel initiative entitled, "Advancing Care for Prostate Cancer Patients 2009 Research Grants." The aim of these grants was to improve the outcomes of prostate cancer patients by development of sustainable processes. Applications were called from nursing or allied health professionals. They were required to be patient-based projects with a research component; have a sound scientific approach and feasibility, include a description of key milestones, research governance processes and mentorship where applicable; and to provide a business plan aiming to demonstrate how the position will move to become financially self-sustaining upon completion of the project. The latter point was included so that this would not be a "one-off" supportive measure, but rather pave the way to changing processes that would be able to be translated into ongoing initiative that could potentially be applicable to other centres.

A significant number of applications were received and these were of very high quality, a great problem for the judging panel to have. I am pleased to announce that the winners of the Advancing Care for Prostate Cancer Patients 2009 Research Grants are:

- Dr Jane Phillips. Project title: Identifying and better supporting vulnerable older men with prostate cancer – NCCI. This project will specifically involve geriatricians in the care of men with prostate cancer.
- Dr Geneviève Baratiny, University of South Australia. Project title: Clinical and quality of life outcomes after pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation for post-prostatectomy urinary incontinence – A randomised controlled trial of a DVD-guided training tool versus standard care.

Congratulations to both the winners and many thanks to all who applied, and in particular to sanofi-aventis and COSA for their support of these grants.

Much of the other activity of the group in recent times has been in consolidation of links between various groups, particularly USANZ, the Australian-Canadian Prostate Cancer Research Alliance, ANZUP, TROG, PoCoG and other cooperative clinical trials groups. Several initiatives are common between many of these groups, such as our plans to facilitate tissue collection and bioinformatics, and to add value to clinical trials by asking additional questions through laboratory studies and psychosocial / supportive care approaches.

## Enabling Project Update

### **COSA & Cancer Cooperative Trial Groups**

Inception of the COSA Umbrella Insurance Scheme for the 9 participating Cancer Cooperative Trial Groups took place on 1 June 2009. A governance process has been developed and a strategy will be put in place to minimise and manage risk. Once it is fully operational, the Umbrella Scheme for Cooperative Trial Groups will provide a cost effective, simplified and more streamlined approach to the management of insurance for clinical trials within Australia.

In 2007 and 2008, the COSA Executive Officers Network (EON) developed a standard Clinical Trial Research Agreement (CTRA) for Cooperative Trial Groups (CTGs) in consultation with the Victorian Managed Insurance Agency (VMIA) and the NSW Department of Health. This standard CTRA for CTGs has been endorsed by VMIA, NSW Health and QLD Health and is currently being used by CTGs. COSA and the EON are currently seeking support in other jurisdictional Health Departments for this national initiative. This year, based on the standard CTRA for CTGs, the COSA EON have developed two other types of CTRAs for CTGs in other jurisdictions: private hospitals (in the early stages) and New Zealand (undergoing review in NZ). The development of these 3 types of standard CTRAs for CTGs represents a substantial initiative towards the streamlining of processes associated with the management of clinical trials.

We recently submitted an Expression of Interest for Continued Support from the NHMRC for the COSA & Cancer Cooperative Trial Groups Enabling Project. Thank you very much to members of the Steering Committee and other individuals for their input and support towards this application. We look forward to a successful outcome from the NHMRC.

**Professor Steve Ackland, Chair**  
**Dr Margie Campbell, Program Coordinator**

Jarad Martin has been tireless in his efforts to promote the interests of the group in the planning for the COSA ASM to be held on 17-19 November 2009 on the Gold Coast. We have an exciting program planned. I encourage you to attend the entire meeting, but for those with time restrictions we have arranged most of the uro-oncology activities for Thursday 19 November. This will consist of a morning session and also a satellite symposium held in the afternoon after the conclusion of the main COSA ASM activities. The afternoon symposium will be a case-based interactive session and we are planning for an eminent international speaker to be part of this. The Group Annual General Meeting will also be held on that day.

Don't plan to go home that night though, because the ANZUP ASM will be held at the same venue on the following day, Friday 20 November 2009. The timing is deliberate so that if you are truly short of time, you need only to stay one night! This will be an opportunity to catch up on the status of the current trials of the group, hear about planned trials, and be part of the Scientific Advisory Committee activities as we move forward. I encourage all of you to be part of this group: membership is free! Visit [www.anzup.org.au](http://www.anzup.org.au), which I hope will be operational by the time this report goes to press.

As indicated previously, the COSA Urologic Oncology group priorities for 2009 and beyond include:

- Increasing the number and diversity of members. Please encourage other people in your department, discipline or diocese to join.
- Establishing subcommittees for tissue collection and bioinformatics. As indicated above, many of these issues are relevant to multiple COSA groups.
- Improving consumer involvement.
- Becoming a resource for advocacy for patients and clinicians involved with urologic cancers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you want further information or you would like to contribute to the groups.

**Ian Davis, Chair**

Email: [ian.davis@ludwig.edu.au](mailto:ian.davis@ludwig.edu.au)

### **Queen's Honours List**

*We congratulate the following members:*

Rick Kefford AM	Carole Pinnock AM
Susan Neuhaus CSC	also: Ian Roos OAM

*Congratulations to:*

Professor Ian Frazer winning the Australian Medical Association Gold Medal.

## **Announcement: 2009 Advancing Care for Prostate Patients Grants**

We are pleased to announce this year's inaugural COSA/sanofi-aventis Advancing Care for Prostate Patients Grant recipients are:

**Dr Jane Phillips, RN PhD**, with her submission entitled: *'Identifying and better supporting vulnerable older men with prostate cancer'*

&

**Dr Geneviève Baratiny, BSc(Hons) PhD(Med) MPHAA**, Research Fellow, with her submission entitled: *'Clinical and quality of life outcomes after pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation for post-prostatectomy urinary incontinence – A randomised controlled trial of a DVD – guided training tool versus standard care.'*

*The standard of the applications were of high quality and we would like to thank all members who submitted applications. We thank sanofi-aventis for supporting COSA with this education grant.*

*We look forward to congratulating Jane and Geneviève during the Multidisciplinary trials for high-risk prostate cancer concurrent session, Thursday 19 November at COSA's ASM.*

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## Care Coordination

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The Care Coordination Interest group is progressing with issues identified from the care coordinators survey sent out to COSA members in 2008. We are grateful for the assistance of Beth Ivimey and Douglas Bellamy who have formed a working group to focus on evaluation of care coordination activities. Building on the evaluation framework developed at the COSA 2007 workshop, the working group hope to identify tools and resources to assist care coordinators to collect data that can guide ongoing enhancements to their services. The CNSA Winter Congress held recently in Newcastle provided an opportunity for Care Coordinators to meet and discuss important issues around future direction for care coordination. The meeting was attended by around 30 nurses, with many useful suggestions provided about ways to continue networking and communication amongst care coordinators. COSA is well placed to provide a forum for care coordinators to network, share ideas on professional development needs and be a voice for care coordinator's working concerns. Health professionals who have an interest in cancer care coordination are welcome to join the interest group. To join, contact Kathy Ansell at COSA, email [kathy.ansell@cancer.org.au](mailto:kathy.ansell@cancer.org.au).

**Patsy Yates, Chair**

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## Complementary Medicines

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Our thanks go to the Complementary Medicines Interest group members who have volunteered their time and expertise to review and agree on a range of complementary medicines resources for the COSA membership. Six groups have been working in categories of: definitions, reference websites, guidelines for health professionals, warning and safety alerts, research, guidelines on how to speak with patients about CAMs. The website section on the COSA site will be launched at the ASM.

**Bogda Koczwarra, Chair**

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## Developing Nations

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The Developing Nations group received an excellent response from the survey sent to COSA members earlier this year. Nine projects have been listed on the COSA website 'register of projects' in developing nations. Members who participated also gave some sound advice for when considering undertaking a project abroad. A Hypothetical session based on embarking on a project abroad will take place at the ASM. It will embrace issues like; 'what part should you take on in an overseas project?' Active audience participation will provide valuable commentary on project issues around screening, education, treatment and will also talk about the dilemmas! The group hopes to flag a project prior to the ASM meeting, we welcome your participation.

**Matthew Links, Chair**

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## Geriatric Oncology

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Members of the Geriatric Oncology working group are embarking on a number of projects. The first project is to undertake a prospective study on medical oncology clinical practices for patients over the age of 70. The study will look

at patient records and collect specific data which will provide insight into current practices at four proposed sites. The second project is to develop a survey to membership enquiring on their current clinical practice. This will provide valuable information for reporting at the professional day workshop to be held prior to the November ASM. The workshop aims to review and decide on a national geriatric assessment tool. Professor Catherine Terrett, a leading expert in geriatric oncology in Europe will be presenting at the ASM and will provide guidance at the workshop.

**Christopher Steer, Chair**

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## Tissue banking

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The coming months are going to be an exciting period as we drive the tissue banking project forward. We recently completed the tender process and appointed Deloitte as the health economic consultant who will work with us during the next stage of the project – to complete issues and discussions papers defining the solution to tissue banking from clinical trials and identifying how COSA can facilitate this. I invite you to read more about this project in the Cancer Research group section in this edition of *Marryalyan*.

**Nik Zeps, Chair**

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## Neuroendocrine tumours (NETs)

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Since the last edition of *Marryalyan*, we have continued to work towards some of the recommendations that came out of last year's NETs workshop. To date, we have focused on two areas:

- The development of NETs management guidelines for use in Australia and New Zealand
- The development of a national NETs database and tumour registry.

I am pleased to announce that we will be holding the Australasian NETs Consensus Guidelines Workshop on 21 August 2009, to be attended by invited health professionals across a range of multidisciplinary fields including nuclear medicine/radiology, medical and surgical oncology, care coordination, gastroenterology, endocrinology and pathology. This workshop will see the completion of the draft guidelines for external review and ongoing development. We have received funding in the form of untied grants from Ipsen Pty Ltd and Novartis Pty Ltd to support this workshop.

The development of a national NETs database and tumour registry is being explored with the following objectives:

- To collect epidemiological data on NETs in Australia
- To collect data on the management and treatment of patients with NETs
- To collect data that will allow the outcomes of patients with NETs in Australia to be evaluated.

Currently we have completed the proposal phase and this has been submitted to COSA Executive for consideration. We look forward to taking this latest NETs interest group project forward.

**Yu Jo Chua, Chair**



## *The Tom Reeve Oration Award* FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANCER CARE

### CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS:

Nominations must be made by a COSA member with support from a Council Chair.

Each nomination should include:

- An explanation of the nominee's work in the area of cancer control or research
- An evaluation of the accomplishments of the nominee
- Letters of reference from two individuals from outside the nominees' institution (where applicable). These letters should contain a critical appraisal of the nominee's work.

Nominations and supporting documentation should be sent by the **closing date of Friday 25 September 2009.**

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS ARMS Excellence Award 2009

ARMS offers awards for outstanding contributions that have enhanced the profession of research management and administration, and reflect our strategic directions and organisational values of promoting the research enterprise and enhancing the interface between research and its management.

The winner of the Award is selected by the Executive Committee and announced at the annual Conference. In addition, the winner is recognised by the presentation of a certificate acknowledging their achievement, a feature article in the 'Up in ARMS' newsletter and a \$1,000 payment to their employer to be used for the ARMS members' professional development.

If you are interested in nominating an ARMS member for this prestigious Award, the application must be lodged with the Secretary [Katrina.Hall@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Katrina.Hall@flinders.edu.au), Australasian Research Management Society by 31 July 2009.

## 2009 AstraZeneca Breast Cancer Care Award

National Breast Cancer Foundation announced **Sandra Gregg**, breast cancer nurse from Cairns, as the 2009 AstraZeneca Breast Cancer Care Award winner.

NSW medical oncologists, **Dr Jodi Lynch** and **Associate Professor Fran Boyle**, received highly commended Awards recognising their outstanding care for breast cancer patients.

## COSA SUPPORTS LUDHIANA CONFERENCE



In March this year Dr Rohit Joshi who had trained at the RAH Cancer Centre and then returned to CMC Ludhiana in the Punjab to establish a medical oncology unit, organised a conference for oncologists in northern India focussing

on communication skills and psycho oncology. Rohit had become involved with these in Australia but they had not been presented in India where conferences focussed primarily on the treatment of the cancer.

COSA funded Sid Selva from Adelaide to help facilitate the communication skills workshop and he joined David Currow and me in presenting at the conference. Under the guidance of Fran Boyle and Stewart Dunn at Pam McLean Cancer Communications Centre at the University of Sydney and accompanied by one of their actors we devised a scenarios based on 6 minute consultations to ensure that they were relevant to the practice conditions.

After an initial role play on treatment options from an Australian perspective the audience coached the actors on how the Indian version would go and then took over the roles themselves to explore solutions to the communication problems encountered. On the second day of the conference the medical students were included in the audience.

The interest from the participants and the local press in both the communication and psycho-oncology themes underpinned the success and impact of the conference. International support included COSA, Cancer Council Australia and MASCC and this has seeded an interest in supportive care and communication which is sure to continue as part of the Indian oncology scene.

**Ian Olver**

### *The Luminous Award Australia 2009: Enlightened, Intelligent and Inspiring Cancer Reporting*

Nominations are sought from Australian journalists to enter the Luminous Award Australia 2009. COSA hosts this event and the winner is announced at the Welcome drinks at our ASM.

The Luminous Award Australia recognises journalists who serve their readers/viewers by providing responsible, accurate and timely reporting on advances in cancer prevention, research, treatment and patient support.

Applications are now open for the 2009 competition and application forms for the award are available from the COSA web site [www.cosa.org.au](http://www.cosa.org.au).

The Luminous Award Australia offers a cash prize of A\$5000 in each of two categories – print and broadcast

If you are aware of any quality reports on cancer that deserve to be recognised in this competition, please encourage the reporter to enter, or you can nominate a colleague. **Applications close on Friday 31 July 2009.**

## COSA & Ipsen Travel Grants

Need some financial assistance to get to COSA's ASM? Why not apply for a travel grant? COSA offers a number of Travel Grants to members to attend the Annual Scientific Meeting. We are happy to announce there are a further three grants available through the COSA-Ipsen travel award. Please refer to the COSA website for further information. [www.cosa.org.au](http://www.cosa.org.au)



# COSA'S 36TH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING



**Clinical  
Oncological  
Society of  
Australia**

**17-19 November 2009  
Gold Coast Convention Centre**



*Cancer Services and Our Community: awareness access action*

## INVITED SPEAKERS INCLUDE

**A/Professor David Ball**, Radiation Oncologist, Associate Director – Education, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Melbourne, Australia

**Dr Barry Bultz**, Adjunct Professor and Chief, Division of Psychosocial Oncology, Director, Department of Psychosocial Resources and Program Leader, Psychosocial Oncology, Supportive, Pain and Palliative Care, Tom Baker Cancer Centre, Calgary, Canada

**Dr Normand Laperriere**, Staff Radiation Oncologist, Princess Margaret Hospital and Associate Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

**Dr Bernard J Park**, Thoracic Surgeon, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, USA

**Dr Roger Stupp**, Multidisciplinary Oncology Center, University of Lausanne Hospitals, Lausanne, Switzerland

**Professor Patricia Hollen**, Malvina Yuille Boyd Professor of Oncology Nursing, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA

**Dr Harvey Pass**, Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Division of Thoracic Surgery, NYU Medical Centre, USA

**Dr Dermot Ball**, Network Pharmacist, North London Cancer Network, UK

**Dr Catherine Terret**, Department of Geriatric Oncology, Centre Leon Berard, Lyon, France

**Dr Jacques Grilli**, Department of Paediatric and Adolescent Oncology, Institut Gustave Roussy, Villejuif, France

**Dr Natasha Leighl**, Medical Oncologist, Princess Margaret Hospital, Toronto, Canada

**Dr Carolyn Messner**, Director of Education and Training, Education Department, CancerCare, New York, USA

**Dr Ron Bukowski**, Professor of Medicine, Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University, Ohio, USA

**Dr Renato La Rocca**, Director, Kentuckiana Cancer Institute, Kentucky, USA

**Abstract Submission  
deadline:**

**7 August 2009**

**Early Bird  
Registration ends:**

**28 August 2009**

**All details and processes online at [WWW.cosa2009.org](http://WWW.cosa2009.org)**

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**PLEASE NOTE THE MEETING THIS YEAR WILL RUN FROM TUESDAY 17 NOV TO THURSDAY 19 NOV**