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**Message from Patsy Yates**

**Chair of the Cancer Care Coordination Executive**

Since the last edition of *The Coordinator* the 2012 National Cancer Care Coordination Conference, Towards New Horizons was held. The conference ran over the 6th and 7th of March 2012 and was attended by 257 participants from across Australia and New Zealand. A report on the conference is available on the [COSA website](#) and the presentations are available within the Member's section. There were many excellent presentations addressing interesting new developments in cancer care coordination. I encourage you to review the site for more information. Our Keynote speaker from the UK, Professor Emma Ream, provided an overview of the key coordination needs of people affected by cancer and presented findings from her research about innovative models to ensure patient centred models of care. Other topics which generated considerable interest include survivorship care, the needs of older people with cancer, and models of coordination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Since the conference, the Cancer Care Coordination Interest Group has spent some time reviewing issues identified in the final 'open forum' discussion session held at the end of the conference. The open forum provided an opportunity to review achievements of the group to date, and discuss priorities for the future in three key areas: research, education and collaboration. Key issues raised by participants during the session related to the continued need to demonstrate outcomes from Care Coordinator positions, the need to improve access to the Coordinators and ensure more standardised approaches to practice to reduce variations across services, and the need for better information and tools to support Care Coordinator practice. The Group's Executive has collated this information to inform development of a work plan for the next few years. The Executive will meet in August to formulate this plan and we encourage you to email suggestions to committee members.

The Cancer Care Coordination contacts database launched in June 2011 continues to provide an excellent networking tool. If you are a Cancer Care Coordinator and have not already done so, you can add your details in the database. It provides information on the care coordinator's work contact details, the coordinator's specialty area of care and also any new resources or service improvement initiatives. The database is accessed through the member's area of the COSA website. Updates or the addition of new information should be emailed to Kate Whittaker [kate.whittaker@cancer.org.au](mailto:kate.whittaker@cancer.org.au)

**Message from Jacinta Elks**

**Chair of the Communication and Networking Group**

After taking a brief hiatus following the Conference, the Subcommittee are moving into a new phase of action. We would like to welcome Kate Whittaker as she moves into the position of COSA Project Coordinator, and we look forward to working productively with her. Goals for this year include the continued strengthening of *The Coordinator*, the dedicated national Cancer Care Coordinators newsletter, and an update of the COSA National Cancer Care Coordinators Database. Please look out for the survey requesting your updated details in the near future. I would also like to call for nominations to fill a vacancy in our Committee due to retirement. Please contact Kate Whittaker at COSA for more information, [kate.whittaker@cancer.org.au](mailto:kate.whittaker@cancer.org.au)

**Message from Douglas Bellamy  
Chair of the Education and Conference Group**

Where does the time go? It's the end of June and the Cancer Care Coordination Conference seems so far away now. I'd like to briefly reflect on some of the comments and observations of that experience.

It is clear that roles responsible for the coordination of cancer care are incredibly diverse and that the only constant is in fact that coordination is a focus. There was representation at the Conference from every State and Territory and this provided a great opportunity for colleagues to network and discuss core issues associated with care coordination across Australia. The discussions certainly identified the complex issues faced. One aspect that really stood out for me was that there is a very wide range of levels of experience, with those who are well established in their roles through to those who are beginning in coordination roles and struggling with the enormity of the task. It was pleasing to see attendees taking the opportunity to network and discuss coordination issues. The challenge that I'd put out there now is who has kept in touch and nurtured their networks?

The buzz on the floor at the conference was that the content had hit the mark. There were 17 invited speakers, and from the submitted abstracts 18 oral presentations and 18 poster presentations. Again, there was an impressive diversity demonstrated. I feel that this wealth of knowledge was a demonstration of the complexity of the coordination role and unique value that coordination of cancer care brings to the patient's and carer's cancer journey. An evaluation was sent out after the Conference to gain some feedback from delegates about the conference and its content. Overall, feedback was quite positive with 97% of respondents indicating that they would attend/recommend future COSA Cancer Care Coordination Conferences. I know that I have reflected on, and indeed used what I have learned at the Conference – it has influenced the Cancer Plan for the area where I work.... an impact that will be realised over the next 5 years. This of course will only be achieved through a solid multidisciplinary team effort – and those in coordinated care roles are very well placed to influence and lead the development of services. That was another thing that was clear at the Conference – those in Coordinator roles are innovators and leaders. It is something that I feel is worth nurturing and growing through a strong network.

On to what the participants are requesting. The post- conference evaluation included questions asking what types of support COSA could provide between Conferences to its Members. The comments and requests centred on keeping Cancer Care Coordinators connected, engaged and up to date with new information. Use of the COSA Cancer Care Coordinator [web page](#) was highlighted and it was suggested that it could be used to more efficiently promote interaction through the Group's online forum. Through this online forum information can be circulated, useful links attached and potential educational avenues promoted by COSA or its Members. The Cancer Care Coordinator database was overall praised as a networking resource and I would encourage Coordinators whose details are not on this database to think about adding their professional information. You can contact [Kate Whittaker](#) for more information or to add your details. The database and the online forum are only accessed through the Member's area of the [COSA website](#).

As well as the post-conference evaluation, the final open forum of the program allowed delegates to discuss issues in Cancer Care Coordination as they stand presently, but also express suggestions for National approaches into research, definition and evaluation of a Care Coordinator role, and exploring Rural and Regional and Indigenous needs in Cancer Care, just to name a few. The format and frequency for future Cancer Care Coordination Conferences were discussed by Members.

The COSA Cancer Care Coordination Interest Group, along with the three working groups, will consider the feedback from this conference in their work going forward and thank everyone who gave their time to participate in the discussions. Thank you to the Cancer Care Coordination Executive, and I especially would like to recognise the contribution from the Education and Conference Working Group. Lastly, I cannot emphasise enough the fantastic effort that Kathy Ansell has put into the group. I am grateful for her enthusiasm and effort.

## Service Improvements & Resource Development

Please click on the links below to read about projects your colleagues have undertaken.

[Establishing the Links in Rural and Remote Cancer Care Coordination](#) (pdf, 64KB)

### HOT TOPIC:

#### **COSA-IPOS Annual Scientific Meeting**

**13-15 November 2012**

**Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre**

Have you registered for the COSA Annual Scientific Meeting yet?

Did you know this year COSA is jointly hosting the meeting with the International Psycho Oncology Society (IPOS), so the meeting will have a definite psycho-oncology focus. COSA's disease themes will concentrate on skin cancer, melanoma and carcinoma of the unknown primary. As always, there will be concurrent sessions on all the common cancers too.

One session which may be of interest to cancer care coordinators is **"The public health approach to survivorship" at 11:00am on Tuesday 13 November.**

Coordinated and chaired by Liz Eakin, speakers in this session include:

- Afaf Girgis - "Post treatment survivorship care - What models of care do cancer survivors find acceptable?"
- Michael Jefford - "Evaluating nurse-led and shared care models of post-treatment care for survivors of bowel and prostate cancer"
- Sandi Hayes - "Evaluating telephone versus face-to-face modes of exercise intervention delivery to women during and following treatment for breast cancer"
- Marina Reeves - "Evaluating a telephone-delivered weight loss intervention in women following treatment for breast cancer"
- There will also be time for Q & A at the end

More information about the COSA-IPOS ASM is available on our website [www.cosa-ipos.org](http://www.cosa-ipos.org)

Travel Grants are also available to COSA members to assist conference attendance – we know how difficult it can be to obtain funding for these events!

We hope to see you in Brisbane in November.

**We encourage you to join COSA and be part of a dynamic network!**

[CLICK HERE](#) to join today

COSA Cancer Care Coordination interest group members are active in the formation of structures that will support key areas in:

- the development of a common 'tool kit' of data items and validated tools
- formation of networks for information sharing by Cancer Care Coordinators across the country as well as web-based approaches to sharing resources and experiences
- promoting the benefits of the Cancer Care Coordination role within the multidisciplinary team and more broadly to the healthcare community
- developing an educational strategy to identify and encourage training in the core skills that underpin the cancer care coordination, regardless of who is undertaking the role
- collaborative research initiatives to develop and implement a national evaluation strategy that will measure the impact of the Cancer Care Coordinator role.

**Service Announcements**

**New Website!**

Country Cancer Support South Australia

A joint initiative involving cancer patients across South Australia (SA), Country Health SA, Cancer Council SA, the Spencer Gulf Rural Health School, and the University of Adelaide has produced a [website](#) offering information on practical ways rural people affected by cancer can help themselves. It also contains important information on how to cope, and who can help. The website aims to meet the needs of rural cancer patients and survivors, as well as families, carers and health professionals, and hopes to address inequalities for rural residents.

Visit the website for more information: [www.countrycancersupport.com.au](http://www.countrycancersupport.com.au)

*We value your feedback. Please email [kate.whittaker@cancer.org.au](mailto:kate.whittaker@cancer.org.au) with suggestions of what you would like to see in our newsletter.*

*Thank you*

***Louise Underhill , Editor.***