

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Vanessa Owen

Another International Midwives Day has come and gone and what a celebration it was throughout the country and indeed the world. Numerous activities were held, from displays, dinners and conferences. The celebration of IMD is also a celebration of the joy of birth, the importance of women in all societies and the fundamental role midwives play on the support of families across the world. The international



Vanessa Owen

theme for midwives this year is 'equity'. Midwives support women's rights to equal status in the community and to choice and control in healthcare during their childbearing years. A healthy, informed and confident woman who knows how to make choices has the best chance of exper-

ience. The College will continue to strive for the right of every woman to choose to have a midwife provide her care in any setting, be that at home, in a birth centre or in a hospital. We will also continue to lobby for financial recompense for women who choose midwifery care.

The College also acknowledges its responsibility particularly to Aboriginal families in this country and is committed to working along side them to help improve maternal and infant health outcomes. The College through ACT, NT and NSW, and in conjunction with peak Aboriginal bodies is developing a statement on national reconciliation.

Myself and Karen McAllister, Professional Marketing Manager, Johnson and Johnson launched the national Midwife of the Year award on 5th May. The College, recognising the importance of midwives, and acknowledging their work has endorsed this award. Mothers will be asked to complete the nomination form, outlining the role their midwife played throughout their pregnancy and childbirthing

experience. Every midwife nominated will receive a certificate, with the State and National winners receiving a prize. We hope to have the first national recipient for IMD in 2001.

Although IMD has passed for another year, the work must continue. Every day tell someone proudly that you are a midwife. Once you have told them, ask them if they know what a midwife does. Spread the word. Midwife must be a key word for every household if we are going to effect major change in this country. Try and join up a member. If every member joined up just one more midwife, our membership would double.

The national executive met for three days in March with a strategic planning day on the Friday before the meeting. By the time this goes to print, a copy of the strategic plan should be distributed to all branches for finalisation. As you can imagine an enormous amount of work has been generated from this day and all branches are participating in achieving key objectives.

The GST remains a hot topic and has taken an inordinate amount of time for all branches and the national office. The national decision was to 'group' rather than 'branch' (GST speak) and most of the branches have decided to do this. To assist with this process an IT strategy has also been decided on with a short and long-term approach. National has purchased computers for those branches who do not currently own one. All branches have also been provided with the most up to date version of MYOB (Mind Your Owen Business), and education has been offered for 3 members of each branch. This will ensure that all branches will be able to communicate information electronically, with the same reporting systems. This will hopefully assist the workload for all concerned. I again need to thank Moyra Lewis for her work in ensuring that this has been achieved. It has been a very challenging time for all involved and Moyra, along with each branch treasurer has worked overtime to ensure that these systems will be in place in time for GST implementation (see Treasurer's report).

At the March meeting the national executive was pleased to hear a presentation from Nicky Leap on

the progress of the Bachelor of Midwifery Taskforce. The College has endorsed the submission presented by the taskforce and will fund the development of the Bachelor of Midwifery with a \$25,000.00 grant. In association with state/territory registering authorities the College also resolved to seek to become the accrediting body for midwifery education programs conducted within Australia. The Bachelor of Midwifery will be entry to practice midwifery in the form of a three or four year degree. There is no requirement that the midwifery students will have studied nursing before studying midwifery. These programs will offer a choice of education for midwifery students. The Bachelor of Midwifery (in the form of a three or four year degree) will be entry to practice midwifery. There is no requirement that midwifery students will have studied nursing before studying midwifery. Recognition of prior learning will occur so nurses who choose to study midwifery will be eligible for this.

The new degree will produce competent safe practitioners, capable of working with women throughout their experience of childbirth in a range of settings, including hospitals and the community. It is anticipated that they will be able to practice in the full scope of the international definition of a midwife. Australian midwives will have a qualification that is internationally recognised and they will be able to work anywhere in the world without having to undertake further education. This is an exciting initiative for the College and much work needs to be done. The College feels that it is vital that it is the leader in the establishment of midwifery education. Further reports from the taskforce will be provided.

The ACMI constitution needs urgent review. I know this may appear daunting when you first think of it, but I prefer to look at it this way. Ask yourself – Are you, a member, happy with the way the College currently functions? Do you like the way the delegates and office bearers are elected? Should delegates be elected from each state/territory or on popular polling, or a combination of both? Should it stay the way it is? Is it reasonable to expect that if the national executive makes a decision, then the branches be compelled to follow this recommendation? The national executive is currently working under a constitution that many feels needs updating. If you want something about the function of the College changed, then tell us (in writing) what it is that you

want changed, and how you would like it changed. You don't need to provide us with the exact wording for the constitution, rather what the changes are that you would like and how you would implement them. By active participation you are ensuring that the College performs and participates in the way that you want and expect.

The national executive wants to present this information to the members in January 2001 at the research forum to be held in Melbourne. This will be necessary so that the amendments to the constitution can be presented at the biennial conference in Brisbane in 2001.

The ACMI will be hosting the 27th International Confederation of Midwives congress in 2005. The host city will be Brisbane with the Brisbane Convention Centre as the venue. This is a major undertaking and members of the working party met in March to establish terms of reference. The ACMI national executive has delegated total responsibility for the ICM congress 2005 to the Congress 2005 management committee according to the terms of reference. To safeguard the interests of ACMI, the Congress 2005 management committee will form a separate subsidiary entity and that the Congress 2005 management committee manage this separate entity. Caroline Weaver, immediate past president of ACMI, and Vice President of ICM is co ordinating this work and has done a marvelous job so far. Each state/territory will be asked to participate and we are looking forward to all members' ideas and enthusiasm to ensure that this conference is as successful as the one we hosted in 1984. All members are invited to participate in the competition to establish a theme and a logo for the 2005 congress. Be creative and let your inspiration run wild. The prize for the winning midwife is registration at the 2001 biennial conference. A great prize assists another midwife to attend and participate in College activities. See the advertisement in this journal for further details.

The NSW Midwives Association is to be congratulated on changing their name to ACMI NSW branch. This further consolidates the approach to ensure that we are a national body, and shows a commitment on behalf of NSW to this strategy.

Kathleen Fahy has begun dialogue with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and is planning a meeting with them in Canberra. The meeting will focus on anti competitive practices

affecting midwives and women. Kathleen and her team need to be congratulated on this work. It can only be achieved through participation of members. We will keep you informed of the progress.

The national advisory committee of BFHI met on April. I attended as a guest for the two-day meeting, along with the presidents of the Australian Lactation Consultants Association (ALCA) and Nursing Mothers Australia Association (NMAA). After much discussion a working party was formed to examine the possibility of forming a governing consortium for BFHI with the other key players. A full day workshop was set aside for this important work and we will let you know the outcomes. The ACMI is committed to enhancing the success of BFHI ensuring support for women and their families throughout the country. As such we are open to any suggestions or feedback on how to improve the current initiative.

The College has endorsed the Parents First Step video produced by Mercy Health and Aged Care. The video is an introduction to parenting through the experiences of one couple. (More information next edition). The ACMI is further developing a process for endorsement of such products.

The College is entering into discussions with a variety of organisations in relation to corporate sponsorship. This is widely accepted as a way of the future ensuring that we will remain a viable option in the future.

The national executive attempts to represent its members as best it can on a voluntary basis. It is difficult to act on matters that concern you if you do not advise us what the matters are. I urge you to think about the function and structure of the College and let your delegate, or myself, know if you have any suggestions or comments. We need to have your active input.

Vanessa Owen
President

Wanted

Women who care


Did you know that an increasing number of infertile couples require the use of donor eggs in order to have a child?

And did you know that if Australia's leading Donor Egg program doesn't recruit donors now, the couples on our waiting list requiring donor eggs will remain childless?

Please contact Monash IVF,
Richmond, on (03) 9429 9188
between 8.30am and 5pm,
Monday to Friday. Strict confidentiality will be maintained.


NO COSTS INVOLVED

Monash IVF



This advertisement has been approved by the Victorian Minister for Health, July 1999

DMA COLUPRO



MIDWIFERY QUIZ

Do you know the answers to these questions without going to the books?

1. Q. Name the current Editor of the ACMI Journal?
2. Q. Old McDonald was a farmer and had a farm and he measured the noises his cows, chooks, sheep etc made. What did the other McDonald. who is in the midwifery textbooks, measure?
3. Q. Name the SA, NSW and Queensland Year 2000 Midwife of the Year?
4. Q. Where would I find Chadwick's sign?
5. Q. In a breech there are two maneuvers that are done. One is nicknamed 'smelly feet'. What is Smellie Viet's first name?
6. Q. Name the second maneuver?
7. Q. Which side of the placenta presents in a Duncan mechanism?
8. Q. Name the person who writes the regular column Midwives You've got Mail in the ACMI Journal?
9. Q. If the first day of my last menstrual period was on 24 February 2000, and using Nagles rule, what would be the expected date of delivery?
10. Q. How does a new mother receive a free Emma's gift pack?

The answers will be in the September journal.