

NZ Paediatric and Child Health Division Committee – 2014 in Review

At the end of 2014 New Zealand has a new Minister of Health who has stated his priorities include vulnerable children, a third term Prime Minister who has used the word poverty, and a Minister of Finance who talks about investment in early years.

The year has seen significant changes in the Committee's membership. In May, Dr Adrian Trenholme stepped down as Chair, and on behalf of the Committee I thank him for his dedication and leadership. Long-serving Māori Health Committee founding Chair and NZ P&CHDC representative Dr Leo Buchanan retired from his roles on these Committees. As new Chair, but with past College involvement, I recognise and acknowledge his immense contributions to our countries and our cultures.

The Committee has contributed to many activities in 2014, advocating for the health and wellbeing of all children in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The Committee has written to the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners, the Pharmacy Guild and to the Plunket Society of their concerns around children's multivitamins. These products are often marketed towards children using bright colours and recognisable characters, while also being a product of a soft, gummy consistency – very much like a lolly.

The Committee followed this letter with an article in the October issue of the [RACP News](#) about products targeting children – the aforementioned multivitamins, and the increased touting of sugar-laden energy drinks being marketed to children in the context of team sport.

Fluoridation of water supplies remains a high-interest public health topic, and the Committee contributed an article (jointly with the Māori Health Committee) outlining developments in the fluoridation debate in New Zealand.

The Committee continues to enjoy a strong relationship with the Paediatric Society of New Zealand, and looks forward to strengthening synergies in advocacy for tamariki. It also aims to forge stronger links with the Society of Youth Health Professionals Aotearoa New Zealand (SYPHANZ) around the recognition of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine as a specialty scope.

In 2015, the Committee looks to increase visibility and engagement with the wider Paediatric and Child Health Division in New Zealand, work with other College bodies and external agencies to improve the health outcomes for children, and to be of value to the Fellows it represents.

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