

Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (AFOEM)
Annual Members' Meeting (AMM)

Report from the President – Dr Beata Maria Byok

Tuesday, 7 May 2019

"Tēnā koutou" which means "Greetings to all",

I welcome all Fellows and Registrars to the AFOEM Annual Members' Meeting for 2019. My congratulations and a warm welcome to each of our new Fellows. It is a great achievement to be proud of. On behalf of our new Fellows, I also acknowledge the role of training supervisors in attaining this goal.

The activities and achievements of the past twelve months have been a team effort. We are fortunate to have such enthusiastic and engaged colleagues, willing to give up their unpaid time for the benefit of those we look after and for our membership.

Acknowledgements and thanks

I acknowledge and thank all of the members of:

- AFOEM Council.
- Faculty Education Committee – Chair, Dr Alison Drewry.
- Faculty Assessment Committee – Chair, Dr Andrew Lingwood.
- Faculty Training Committee – Chair, Dr Armand Casolin.
- Faculty Policy and Advocacy Committee – Chair, Dr Warren Harrex
- Regional Committees.

A/Prof Tony Brown has stood down as Chair of the Faculty Assessment Committee as he has completed the maximum number of years in the role. On behalf of the Faculty I extend sincere thanks for his contribution and dedication to the role.

Dr David Cleveland, Trainee Representative on AFOEM Council is standing down from his position. He has been a valuable contributor to Council bringing the views and concerns of Trainees to our attention and advocating for the role of occupational physicians in the workplace specifically in the coal mining industry in Queensland. I thank David on behalf of Council for his involvement and hope that in the future he is again part of Council or another committee in AFOEM.

Otherwise the membership of the AFOEM Council remains unchanged; Professor Malcolm Sim as President-Elect, Dr Sandra McBurnie (NSW), Dr David Fitzgerald (ACT), Dr Dominic Yong (Victoria), Dr Michael Lucas (WA), Dr Graeme Edwards (Queensland), Dr Helen McArdle (Tasmania), Dr Alexandra Muthu (New Zealand), Dr Josh Munn (SA) and Dr Miguel Kabilio (ANZSOM representative).

It was with very great sadness that we lost *Dr Kevin Sleigh*, on 11 October 2018. He was a well-known, respected, active and loved member of our Faculty and also within ANZSOM. The Victorian AFOEM Committee working together with WorkSafe Victoria and ANZSOM will hold an annual Kevin Sleigh memorial lecture to honour the contributions that Kevin made to these organisations. The first lecture will be on 19 August 2019. The speaker is Dr Dielle Felman (psychiatrist) talking about return to work strategies in workers with mental health problems. The presentation will be available via videoconference. The orator will be presented with an engraved commemorative medal. Our thoughts are with his family.

In addition, each year the winner of the Ramazzini Prize who in 2019 is Dr Bianca Cheong will be invited to present their research paper at the ANZSOM/AFOEM collaborative meeting in October 2019, at the inaugural Dr Kevin Sleigh Memorial Presentation.

Thanks to Faculty and College Staff

Thank you to all the Faculty and College staff in the areas of administration, Education, Policy and Advocacy. I especially express sincere thanks to Lisa Penlington (Director Member Services), Phillipa Warnes (Manager Faculties), Joanne Goldrick (Acting Manager Faculties) Cara Loftus, Lucie Perrissel-Taggart (Executive Officers) and Claire Celia (Senior Policy Officer) for their outstanding work and support in helping us to achieve our goals.

Council and Committee positions I currently hold are;

1. President/Chair AFOEM Council
2. Faculty Policy and Advocacy Committee
3. Health Benefits of Good Work Executive
4. Chair RACP Physician Health and Well-Being Reference Group
5. AFOEM representative RACP College Council
6. AFOEM representative RACP Fellowship Committee
7. ANZSOM/AFOEM ASM Scientific Program Committee

Looking back to the start of my Presidency I recall the three focus areas I put forward;

1. Education and Training program
2. Finding out what it is that the Fellows require from our Faculty and College to support them in their practice
3. To continue to progress the current collaborations and projects.

I am pleased to report that all of the above are part of the AFOEM Council's strategic work plan 2019-2020.

Education

On behalf of the Faculty, I extend thanks to the Chair of the Education Committee Dr Alison Drewry and her team.

On 30 April 2019 I participated in a meeting attended by the Faculty Presidents and Chairs of the Education Committees of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Public Health and

Rehabilitation Medicine to discuss the Advanced Training Curricula Review that is to occur over the next 2 years. This was an opportunity for the respective Faculties to highlight the uniqueness of each of their training programs and to have input into the development of faculty relevant program specific content. Follow-up meetings are planned as the review continues.

MyCPD

Dr David Fitzgerald has been nominated by Council as the AFOEM Lead Fellow to liaise on behalf of the Faculty with Michael Pooley, Senior Project Officer, Learning Support Unit, from the CPD unit. David will assist the CPD unit to identify activities and develop resources to assist AFOEM Fellows meet their Category 2 (review of performance) and Category 3 (measurement of outcomes) CPD requirements, particularly for those in non-clinical roles. If you have questions or suggestions these can be passed on to the Faculty office at AFOEM@racp.edu.au.

Progress on the AFOEM Council's Strategic Work Plan is underway to improve the visibility and availability of research resources on the RACP website and to emphasize research as a cornerstone and foundation of OEM practices through education and publication of OEM research articles, opportunities and grants.

Collaboration and increased communication between Division, Faculties and Chapters

On Tuesday, 16 January 2019 I had the pleasure of participating in a teleconference with the Presidents of Adult Medicine Australia and NZ, Paediatrics, Public Health, and Rehabilitation Medicine. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss our respective workplans with a view to identifying commonalities where we can work together, rather than in isolation.

Some of the areas identified were communication, physician health and wellbeing, education, curricula review, research support and resources.

The discussion highlighted what is happening in other areas of the College and what their priorities are. It was also an opportunity to connect Presidents together particularly important since the devolution of the College Board from a representational Board to a skills-based Board. One outcome of the meeting is that the respective workplans will be reviewed with regard to the strategic goals of each group to ensure consistency in their alignment, with those of the Board. The workplans will be shared across participating Councils and Committees.

The aim is for the group to meet quarterly. Advice will be sought from governance on how to formalise this as a forum for discussion and a means of reporting to College Council.

This is an exciting development and in line with the AFOEM Workplan to improve communication and collaboration with other College bodies.

More effective communication to be enabled between AFOEM members is subject to whole of College infrastructure review and IT upgrade.

Information from the Membership Survey will be utilised as a starting point to gain an understanding of the 'needs and wants' of AFOEM members. The results of the survey will be brought to the next Council meeting.

Policy and Advocacy

The Policy and Advocacy Committee has had some exceptionally busy 12 months. On behalf of our Faculty I thank the Faculty Policy and Advocacy Committee members ably led by the Chair Dr Warren Harrex, for their hard work and commitment. As an overview;

Accelerated Silicosis

Dr Graeme Edwards has been pivotal in identifying the presence and magnitude of this preventable and at present untreatable condition in Queensland in September 2018. Since then he has worked tirelessly with the Policy and Advocacy Committee, collaborating with other specialty societies, respiratory physicians and radiologists, to address the devastating and fatal outcomes associated with this disease. He has helped to develop policy statements, to lobby state and federal governments and insurers, and had input into calls for the establishment of a national occupational respiratory disease registry and the development of clinical guidelines for the identification and management of the condition.

A joint AFOEM/TSANZ proposal for a National Registry for Occupational Lung Diseases was presented to the Clinical Principal Committee (CPC) in February 2019. The CPC provides strategic advice to the Australian Health Minister's Advisory Council (AHMAC) on issues of national significance that require technical clinical expertise.

AFOEM has contributed to the RACP NSW State Election Statement on Accelerated Silicosis. RACP has identified this as one key priority and are calling for whichever party takes government to implement, 1) the immediate health screening and surveillance of workers and stonemasons working with artificial stone, 2) to review workplace controls and exposure to dust levels, and 3) to collaborate with the Federal and other state and territory governments on this national issue.

Queensland, NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia are addressing accelerated silicosis to varying degrees.

In November 2018 as President of AFOEM I sent out a letter to all State and Territory relevant Ministers and Heads of Regulatory Authority seeking their support for urgent health assessment and monitoring of all potentially exposed workers, to enable early identification and optimal management of those found to have accelerated silicosis and the implementation of effective prevention strategies. I received responses from Queensland, ACT, WA, SA. AFOEM has endorsed and added its support to an application from TSANZ for an NHMRC grant to conduct research into obtaining a better understanding of the artificial stone silicosis epidemic in Australia, how it can be prevented and treated.

In March 2019 letters from the Presidents of RACP (Prof Mark Lane), AFOEM (Dr Beata Byok), and TSANZ (Prof Allan Glanville) were sent to relevant Commonwealth Ministers and Shadow Ministers and to all State and Territory Ministers for Health and Industrial Relations asking them to establish a Dust Diseases Taskforce. The letter called for a national coordinated response and outlined the proposed terms of reference to address the current epidemic of accelerated silicosis.

On April 30, 2019 prior to the Australian Federal Election there was a joint media release from RACP, AFOEM, Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, The Australian Institute of

Occupational Hygienists, the Australian New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine and the Lung Foundation, calling on both major parties in the upcoming election to commit to the formation of a national task force and fund a national occupationally acquired respiratory disease surveillance and registry program to address the public health crisis facing the artificial stone benchtop industry. On the same day, the Federal Health Minister the Hon. Greg Hunt, pledged \$5 million to establish a national dust disease taskforce. On May 1, 2019, the following day, the Victorian Premier announced measures to address the dry cutting of any material containing crystalline silica, free health screening for Victoria's 1400 stonemasons, a new compliance code for businesses working with silica and the introduction of an awareness campaign highlighting the risks of working with engineered stone.

Submission to the Australian Parliamentary Inquiry into the management of per-and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) contamination in and around Defence Bases.

College submission to a Parliamentary inquiry into Biotoxin-related illness in Australia was released in October 2018. Dr Graeme Edwards represented the RACP before a parliamentary committee.

College submission to the Productivity Commission report into Compensation and Rehabilitation for current and ex-ADF members.

**Queensland Inquiry into the Health and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018
Responding to Queensland Government Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy**

Request for AFOEM feedback on the proposed expert Medical Advisory Panel aligned with the recommendation of the coal mine dust lung disease (CMDLD) Collaborative Group.

Employment Poverty and Health (EPH)

The Employment Poverty and Health Statement of Principles was approved by AFOEM Council and will be launched in Auckland at Congress. This was a collaborative College activity led by AFOEM, which was represented by Dr David Beaumont (Reference Group Chair), Assoc/Prof. Peter Connaughton and Dr Robin Chase, together with Dr Bret Hart and Dr Farhan Shazad. The statement of principles will be launched at Congress tomorrow.

Health Benefits of Good Work (HBGW)

Continue to support the work of the HBGW campaign and explore additional resourcing. Proposed evaluation of the HBGW impact on organisations and society by gathering qualitative and quantitative data through a survey to current signatories.

AFOEM – ANZSOM Collaboration

The inclusion of an ANZSOM representative on AFOEM Council this year, Dr Miguel Kabilio, who is also a Fellow of the Faculty, ushers in a period of increased collaboration between the two bodies.

The collaborative ANZSOM/AFOEM Annual Scientific Meeting will be held in Adelaide from

27-30 October 2019, with equal input from each body into the scientific program. ANZSOM will hold the financial risk for the ASM.

Dr Josh Munn is the AFOEM representative on a committee that has significant dual representation from ANZSOM members who are also AFOEM fellows.

The Theme is *Making it Work: Practical solutions in Occupational Health*.

Council has also agreed to collaborate on the next ANZSOM conference to be held in Launceston Tasmania 19-22 March 2020. An EOI will be going out for an AFOEM representative to be on the organising committee. The conference is being held earlier in the year because of ANZSOM's involvement as the host body for ICOH 2021 in Melbourne.

ANZSOM has approved the inclusion of an AFOEM Trainee representative in the executive of each ANZSOM Branch and on Federal Council.

A/Prof Peter Connaughton immediate past-president of AFOEM signed a Model of Collaboration with Dr John Heydon ANZSOM (New Zealand) President in May 2018.

Regional Update – Tasmania

In the August 2018 eBulletin there was an article 'Occupational Physicians needed 'Down-Down Under' by Dr Peter Sharman, about the impending crisis due to a potential lack of OEP physicians in Tasmania, as 80% of the OEP's move towards retirement. In response to this crisis and at the invitation of the local members I travelled to Hobart in April and together with Dr Peter Sharman and Dr Helen McArdle attended a full day of meetings, with several organisations, including employers, insurers, unions, AMA, RACGP and the Hon. Sarah Courtney MP, Minister for Building and Construction.

The purpose of the visit was a fact-finding exercise, to support the local fellows and current trainees and an opportunity to fly the flag and raise the profile of occupational physicians; explaining what we do, how our input is essential in achieving and maintaining workplace health and how our expertise is applicable in a wider community context, for example with the NDIS.

I received a positive response from those organisations that we have traditionally worked closely with, general practitioners, insurers, employers and unions. Opportunities and potential strategies were discussed, but more work will need to occur. I asked the Hon. Sarah Courtney to work collaboratively with AFOEM and other key stakeholders to develop a strategy for maintaining and growing a local OEP workforce in Tasmania.

The President's Awards

The awards acknowledge the outstanding contributions of three of our colleagues. I am delighted to announce that the recipients for 2019 are:

- Dr Ilse-Marie Stockhoff, for Education, Training and Assessment

- Dr Graeme Edwards for Policy & Advocacy
- Dr Rosemarie Knight, for Trainee Commitment.

Congratulations to each of them for their leadership and for being role models in the Faculty.

The Deane Southgate Award

The winner of the Deane Southgate Award is Dr Hui Ting Ooi. Congratulations to Dr Ooi on her outstanding results and success.

Indigenous Health Scholarship for Occupational and Environmental Medicine

This is the first time that an AFOEM Indigenous Scholarship has been awarded. Congratulations to the winner of the scholarship Dr Brett Shannon.

2019 Metlifecare Senior New Zealander of the Year

Dr Bill Glass was named the 2019 Metlifecare Senior New Zealander of the Year. Bill's long-standing passion and dedication to improving the lives of workers, particularly those exposed to toxic substances and addressing ways of reducing harmful exposures is an example to us all. His work in the field of occupational medicine has been outstanding and inspirational. Our Faculty is proud to have him as a Founding Father of academic Occupational Medicine in Australia and New Zealand. Congratulations on your well-deserved Award.

Congress 2019

The AFOEM stream program for Congress 2019 has been prepared by Dr Alexandra Muthu and her team. The Theme is *Impacting Health along the Life Course*. Professor Maureen Dollard, Director of the Asia Pacific Centre for Work Health and Safety, a WHO Collaborating Centre for Occupational Health, at the University of South Australia and Honorary Professor at the University of Nottingham will present the Ferguson Glass Oration, titled; *The socio-political context of physician health and well-being*.

Annual Training Meeting 2019

Thank you to Dr Rod Douglas and his team for the vital work of organising the Annual Training Meeting. It has been a very comprehensive and successful program.

Congratulations to both committees for delivering an interesting, vibrant, practical and stimulating program.

Other Activities

International

As AFOEM President I received the following Invitations:

Dr William Buchta, ACOEM President extended an invitation to attend the 2019 American Occupational Health Conference (AOHC) in Anaheim, California, as an AFOEM representative and member of the International Occupational Medicine Society Collaborative (IOMSC). Unfortunately, due to a family commitment I was unable to attend. Dr Peter Connaughton, the

immediate past-President, who is also the AFOEM representative on the International Occupational Medical Society Collaboration attended the meeting.

The Hong Kong College of Community Medicine has invited me to be a keynote speaker at their Annual Scientific Meeting on September 28, 2019 in Hong Kong. The theme is: *Looking for Future Progress in Community Medicine*.

The Future

The Faculty is looking forward to continuing with a range of projects through 2019 to 2020 and I encourage you to join your colleagues in this work, which is interesting, challenging, provides opportunities to engage with other AFOEM members and the wider College community and is rewarding.

Dr Beata Maria Byok
President AFOEM
May 2019