

# CEO's Report

The passing of the days has brought us to the time of another Annual Report for the RANZCOG. As always, it is a pleasure to present to the membership a snapshot of College activity over the reporting period. As is frequently the case nowadays, the temptation to use the somewhat overused term 'busy' comes to mind and has to be dismissed to describe the period in question, not so much because it is not accurate, nor because it is not appropriate; more because it has perhaps become somewhat superfluous.

I have written and spoken throughout the year of analogising RANZCOG to an evolving and maturing organism, with its activities being conducted in a highly dynamic environment. In such environments, with multiple stimuli and demands present that offer a variety of potential responses, the organism tends to be busy; to be otherwise presents potentially unacceptable risk.

Although somewhat of a 'snapshot' of happenings over the past 12 months, the Annual Report does give all involved with the College an indication of the events that have taken place in and around the College. Some entries chronicle events that represent completion of initiatives, others represent works in progress, yet all continue to portray the partnership between College members and College staff that is, I believe, a defining characteristic of RANZCOG and central to the organisation continuing to evolve in a manner that will assure effective survival and growth.

Outside the College, the year has been characterised by major events at government level with the potential to shape the future of RANZCOG and the profession that it represents. Of significant note in Australia has been the Federal Government's review of maternity services and the continued evolution of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS), both of which are beginning to show signs of the details of their final form as this report takes shape. All concerned in the College look forward to clarifying the full implications of these, as well as other government initiatives, on both sides of the Tasman as they unfold, both in regard to activities of the College as well as in regard to the effects on the day-to-day work of members.

Documents such as annual reports speak for themselves to the extent that the available space allows individual items to elaborate the description of activities contained therein. I will, however, use this space to make mention of some specific aspects of College activity that I see of significance.

Firstly, as we are all aware, the so-called 'global financial crisis' has been almost impossible to insulate organisations such as RANZCOG from in a manner that enables long-term effective financial management. What I indicated in last year's Annual Report continues to hold true; that is, while we cannot fully insulate ourselves from the downturn in investment cycles, long-term prudent, considered financial management should enable us to be positioned to take advantage of recoveries in markets for the longer term. Given developments in the final quarter of the financial year covered by this report, it appears that this may have already begun to occur. Regardless, members can be assured of the current sound underlying financial position of the College and a continued prudent approach to the management and use of College finances.

From the point of view of conducting our core activities, it was extremely pleasing to receive notification that accreditation of the College by the Australian Medical Council (AMC) has been extended until December 2013, subject to the submission of satisfactory annual accreditation reports to the AMC. Not only does the AMC accreditation process enable the College to demonstrate external



**Dr Peter White**  
Chief Executive Officer

scrutiny by an independent body, it has the capacity to act as a 'road map' to guide continual improvement in relation to core activities and for progress to be charted over time. For example, the issue of trainee experience in aspects of practice such as gynaecological surgery is one that was raised in the original accreditation report and which is now understood to require examination in the context of a systematic and multi-faceted approach. The continued evolution of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate effective education delivery and the role of stakeholder groups in College activities, including governance, are others that come to mind.

On the matter of governance, members would be aware that the College is actively exploring the utility of its current governance arrangements to determine if they remain the optimal mechanism for enabling the College to most effectively conduct its activities, and for those who act as Directors of the organisation to most effectively fulfil their duties to members. Times have changed since the formation of RANZCOG and its parent bodies and there is a need and a responsibility to ensure that full cognisance is given to the underpinning arrangements that govern the operations of the College. At the time of writing, the Governance Review Working Party was actively conducting its work under Terms of Reference agreed by the College Council and I look forward to the outcomes of the review. At another level, work continues to ensure that the organisational structure of the College is as appropriate as possible to ensure the work of the College is progressed effectively. This year has seen further developments in this regard, most notably the appointment of a Director of Education and Training to facilitate the work of all departments involved directly in those core aspects of College activity.

Of some significance for the College during the period covered by this report was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the College, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) to create the Conjoint Committee for the Diploma of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (CCDOG). The Conjoint Committee is hosted by RANZCOG and replaces the

Joint Consultative Committee on Obstetrics (JCCO) as the body responsible for conducting the DRANZCOG and DRANZCOG Advanced qualifications. The move is felt to enable a firmer underpinning structure for the Diploma qualifications and, over time, in concert with complete reviews of curricula, all aspects of the Diploma qualifications will reflect the new arrangements under the auspices of the CCDOG.

I am pleased to report on the adoption of new processes and associated regulations to enable as similar processes as possible to be applied to the assessment of overseas trained specialists and international medical graduates in obstetrics and gynaecology on both sides of the Tasman. This includes the articulation of clearly defined pathways to RANZCOG Fellowship for international medical graduates assessed in New Zealand by the College, in its capacity as a Branch Advisory Body for the Medical Council of New Zealand. This gives certainty to all involved and demonstrates the significance of interactions with key stakeholders, as well as the productive nature of a forward-focused approach to College activities.

Increasingly, as should be the case, the work of the College is focused on value-adding for all involved in the College and the contents of this Annual Report give clear indications and accounts of this, from hospital accreditation activities, to Provincial Fellows' meetings, to dedicated days for Diplomates at College meetings, to activities such as the Specialist Obstetric Locum Scheme (SOLS). Be it Fellows, Trainees, Diplomates, Associate Members or Educational Affiliates, the College is working actively and is determined to bring relevance and value to the way in which it conducts its activities.

A significant event for the College during the year was the holding of the RANZCOG 2009 Annual Scientific Meeting in conjunction with

the XXIst Congress of the Asia and Oceania Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (AOFOG) in Auckland, New Zealand. The event, held immediately after the the 8th Biennial Conference of the Pacific Society for Reproductive Health (PSRH), was a major undertaking, with in excess of one thousand delegates attending. Feedback from the meeting was extremely positive, with a strong scientific program and an opportunity for delegates to gain insight into aspects of the provision of women's healthcare that they may not encounter generally from other meetings.

As always, I would like to pay tribute to the staff of the College whose commitment to their work continues to make it a privilege for me to do what I do. Clearly, also, I pay tribute to the contributions made by all College members, whether in a formal capacity as Councillors, or in less formal ways. The quality of healthcare in Australia and New Zealand, as well as in other countries in which our members practise or support other practitioners, owes much to the pro-bono contributions made by members of organisations such as RANZCOG.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Christine Tippett as RANZCOG President for the period of the Sixth RANZCOG Council that ended in November 2008. Dr Tippett approached her time as President in a committed manner that reflected her drive and intelligence. She achieved much for the College in that time and it was an honour for me to be able to work with her. Similarly, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the work of Dr Ted Weaver, who has succeeded Dr Tippett and in whose extremely capable hands the responsibilities of leading the College now rest. I thank them both for their absolute support of the College staff and thank all members for their ongoing support of the work of the College.



RECLINING FIGURE 1971 Stone Lithograph. RANZCOG Research Foundation.