

Chief Executive Officer's Report



Dr Peter White
Chief Executive Officer

This Annual Report of the RANZCOG successfully and dutifully chronicles the major activities undertaken by the College throughout the 12-month period that it spans. Clearly, there has been much in the way of activity, however, as we are all aware, even seemingly simple outcomes in print can frequently be underpinned by significant activity that can be missing from such a document. It is testament to all involved in the operations of the College throughout the year that RANZCOG continues to move in a positive direction, effective in its commitment to improving the quality of women's healthcare through the vast range of activities that it undertakes and in which it is involved.

In the previous Annual Report, I wrote of an organisation that was healthy and forward-looking, yet, at the same time, aware of the potentially challenging environment in which it operates. I noted a number of specific aspects of College business that were occupying considerable time and thought on the College 'radar', as well as initiatives that had been recently implemented with a view to both ensuring that the College was focused on ensuring quality in its core activities and looking to embrace external stakeholders and opportunities.

Little has changed since that time in the nature of the environment in which the College operates. Certainly, there is much activity in the government sector at a Federal level in Australia (notably, the work of the Health and Hospital Reform Commission and the national approach to medical registration and accreditation), while in New Zealand, the creation of the Medical Training Board and the Maternity Services Strategic Advisory Group are developments that have clear, direct potential implications for College members. On both sides of the Tasman, work relating to the policies and procedures to be used for the assessment and supervision of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) continues and the College has made concerted efforts to actively engage with the bodies responsible for such developments.

The initiatives introduced to ensure the ability of the College to embrace a wide range of medical practitioners involved in the provision of women's healthcare through the provision of the Associate Member and Educational Affiliate categories of membership, has proved timely from the perspective of both the College and the individuals involved, as access to a quality, structured program of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) becomes increasingly relevant.

The period of this Annual Report has seen the bedding down of the operations of the External Projects Advisory Committee (EPAC). This committee monitors College participation in externally funded projects, serving both an overview and risk management function, as well as ensuring that new projects undertaken by the College are worthwhile in terms of benefit to the membership. Of significant note in this regard in recent times has been the Specialist Obstetric Locum Scheme (SOLS), which the Australian Federal Government indicated in the May 2008 Budget would have its funding extended and be widened to include GP obstetricians in the coming year. The attainment of external funding for targeted projects continues to be an effective method of enabling worthwhile, yet resource intensive, initiatives that value add to the core work of the College to be developed and brought to fruition. However, it is not a component of College activity that is intended to compete with or overshadow what is traditionally considered 'core' business.

Like many organisations and individuals, the College has not been able to fully insulate itself from the recent movements in local and international financial markets during the period covered by this report. That said, however, we remain in a strong financial position, with the College Council continuing to take a prudent approach to the management of College finances. This saw considerable growth in the period prior to the current downturn in the economic cycle, which should enable this to be repeated as markets stabilise. This considered approach carries through to the running of College operations and is reflected in the efficient operation of the College activities outside of investment activities. I assure members of the awareness of the need for this approach, as well as the commitment of all College staff to ensuring the maximum use is made of available funds.

Another area in which the College has felt the winds of change in recent times is in relation to the recruitment and retention of a suitable College workforce. In supplying increased services to an increasing membership, the College has a need to attract and retain committed, proactive staff with an appropriate skill base that ensures the efficient and effective delivery of services, as well as an increasing intellectual capital. There is no denying that this is becoming more difficult in an increasingly competitive marketplace. There is a need to acknowledge the changing expectations of people in relation to work. The limitations faced by organisations such as RANZCOG may not be able to offer everyone all that they need across an extended period to enable a long-term career.

Continued on page 5.

The College Council and I are mindful of this and remain committed to the constant improvement of RANZCOG as a place of employment that offers the necessary support, professional development and remuneration to best ensure a satisfying professional experience during the time that an individual spends at the College. The staff of RANZCOG, both at College House in Melbourne, as well as in the offices located across Australia and New Zealand, are committed and professional. They are not to be taken for granted and I thank them for their support and continued commitment to the College.

This has been a period of much activity for the sector in which RANZCOG is located. Government reforms, increasing accountability requirements and a desire for constant improvement from all associated with the organisation makes it a stimulating environment to be a part of. There are challenges, but the College is well placed to deal with these and to continue to improve as a result. This organisation continues to be a strong example of how membership organisations can thrive when a genuine will for improvement and a commitment to partnerships between members and staff can be harnessed. I remain committed to being part of that partnership and thank all who have contributed to the activities of RANZCOG that are chronicled in this Annual Report.



*'The Surgeon', bronze. Sculpted by Andor Mészáros, 1944.
Donated by the family of Dr Meg Mulvey (Lady Schlink), 2004.
Located in the Surgeon's Courtyard, College House.*

'This organisation continues to be a strong example of how membership organisations can thrive when a genuine will for improvement and a commitment to partnerships between members and staff can be harnessed.'

Dr Peter White Chief Executive Officer