

Provincial Fellows

Over the last year, we have had a lot of political interest in matters relating to Provincial Fellows. The election of a new Government and the appointment of a new Federal Minister of Health has brought with it the potential for significant change in many rural health issues. A group of Provincial Fellows provided extensive factual and experiential input to the submission for the *Audit of the Health Workforce in Rural and Regional Australia*. The College's submission and the final ministerial report are now available. Provincial Fellows await with interest the implementation of resulting government initiatives.

The *Principles of the National Consensus Framework on Rural Maternity Services* were approved by Council in March 2008. Provincial Fellows were major contributors in the development of this framework, which outlines new directions in rural obstetric practice. Implementation of the framework is yet to be established.

The 2008 Provincial Fellows Annual Scientific Meeting was again a success. It was held in Hervey Bay, Queensland, and was attended by over 100 Fellows, Diplomates, Trainees and exhibitors. This was the first year that Diplomates Days were incorporated into the program of a Provincial Fellows meeting. This integration was seen as a positive way to provide important education and clinical review, as well as the opportunity for Diplomates and Fellows to network with colleagues in similar areas of social and occupational isolation. It is envisaged that Diplomates Days will continue to be a regular component of the Provincial Fellows Annual Scientific Meeting program.

Provincial Fellows have again demonstrated enthusiastic support for specific rural-based College CPD activities. The *Clinical Teleconference Series* has again been well supported. Support Scheme for Rural Specialists (SSRS) projects in laparoscopy, colposcopy and practice visits have been supported, along with finalisation of the Perinatal Mortality and Morbidity Audits in South Australia and Western Australia.

Provincial Fellows are delighted with the additional Commonwealth funding of \$5.9 million for continuation of the Specialist Obstetrician Locum Scheme (SOLS) for the next three years. SOLS is an important workforce support mechanism for rural Fellows.

Provincial Fellows are indebted to College House staff for their tireless work and continued support of our aims and projects. Their involvement in our activities has been crucial to the very successful outcomes for this year.

Dr Philip Hall

Chair, Provincial Fellows Committee

Kate Lawrey

Coordinator, Provincial Fellows Committee

Asia Pacific

This year, the Asia Pacific Committee (APC) has continued to monitor College involvement and support for women's health services in the Asia and Pacific region and implement its strategic plan as discussed in 2006. A significant part of the focus of the APC is providing support in the area of professional development for O and G colleagues in Pacific Island countries. During 2007-2008, 27 Pacific O and G specialists were awarded Associate Membership of RANZCOG by Council. These practitioners participate in the College CPD program and pay an annual subscription to RANZCOG. Through the APC each year, RANZCOG offers a number of scholarships to annual scientific meetings and regional meetings as professional development opportunities for Pacific O and G specialists, as well as workshops and training placements through the Brian Spurrett Foundation, which are also open to Pacific midwives.

In early 2008, the APC discussed a new initiative to target College support in the area of human resource development in order to strengthen teaching and education at the School of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and the Fiji School of Medicine (FSM). A proposal to initiate an annual RANZCOG Academic O and G Fellowship for both the UPNG and FSM, to attract graduates to vacant academic posts at these institutes by providing financial assistance to support professional development attached to these positions, was approved by the RANZCOG Executive and Council in early 2008. This initiative will commence in 2009 and it is hoped that it will provide a short-term solution to the problem of filling academic positions whilst other longer term solutions are addressed and implemented.

The APC monitors RANZCOG involvement and support for the Asian region through representation on the Asia and Oceania Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (AFOG) and the Pacific region through the Pacific Society for Reproductive Health (PSRH). In addition, the APC continues to liaise and collaborate with other regional reproductive health bodies in the pursuit of the mutual goals of improving women's health services and addressing maternal mortality and morbidity in the region.

Prof Glen Mola

Chair, Asia Pacific Committee

Carmel Walker

Coordinator, Asia Pacific Committee