



Australian College of Neonatal Nurses Inc.

PO Box 32 Camperdown NSW 1450

www.acnn.org.au ABN 62 075 234 048

Newsletter

March 2020

About the newsletter

This newsletter is the official communication of the Australian College of Neonatal Nurses to its members, produced quarterly in March, June, September and December. It presents information on a range of professional issues and clinical topics of interest to neonatal nurses. Any member of ACNN may contribute.

Articles should be submitted by email as Word documents. Any images should be in jpg format. Referencing style should follow the Vancouver style. All content will be edited to newsletter standard.

Editor: Shelley Reid. Proofreader: Jan Polverino.

Please send correspondence to the newsletter team at newsletter@acnn.org.au

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those held by the Australian College of Neonatal Nurses Inc.

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Next deadline: 1 May 2020

ACNN National Executive Committee 2019 – 2020

Office-bearers

President	Anndrea Flint
Vice president	Amy Forbes-Coe
Secretary	Shelley Reid
Treasurer	Samantha Lannan

Committee members

Dustylee Williams
Megan Culell

Professional Officer - Dr Linda Ng

Executive Support Officer - Dr Karen New

From the President

Christmas seems like a distant memory, hopefully everyone had a wonderful festive season, enjoying time with loved ones. Currently we are experiencing a rapidly changing environment due to Covid-19. The Executive met on 14 and 15 March and agreed that all seminars and workshops would be cancelled until 17 May, when this decision will be reviewed again. The scheduled trip to PNG in May has also been cancelled.

ACNN is moving ahead with planning of the National Conference on 2 – 4 September. The registration and abstract portals are open. Members wishing to gain clinically relevant up to date information to care for mothers and babies should access these recommended sites:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-on-covid-19-pregnancy-childbirth-and-breastfeeding>

https://www.thelancet.com/coronavirus?dgcid=kr_pop-up_tlcoronavirus20

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/maternal-or-infant-illnesses/covid-19-and-breastfeeding.html>

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-guidance-paediatric-services>

Further news is that the website is currently being reviewed and updated, which is a huge job and much work is taking place reviewing current documents that guide and direct the administration of the ACNN.

Many of the SIGs have great plans for the year which we hope to support in coming to fruition, so this is extremely exciting.

My last message is not just as President but as a colleague: please stay safe and take the advised precautions in your workplace and community.

Regards and best wishes,

Anndrea Flint

ACNN President



Photo by permission

New South Wales Branch

The ACNN NSW branch committee wishes to advise that the annual country seminar planned to be held in Port Macquarie on 27 June 2020 has been cancelled. This is in response to the tighter restrictions recently put in place by the Federal and State Governments in response to the coronavirus pandemic. We are very sad that this decision had to be made, as this is only the second time in more than 30 years that the country seminar has not been held in regional NSW. Plans for the seminar had already started so we intend to pick them up again next year.

The NSW branch is also conducting a membership drive. New members joining since 1 January and all current members renewing for 2020-2021 will go in to a draw. Two names from each category will be randomly selected with the prize being full registration and conference dinner at the next ACNN conference. Make sure you renew by 13 July to be in with a chance.

Victoria Branch

ACNN Vic Branch congratulates Sil Sissing and Lorna Kerr on achieving Neonatal Nurse Practitioner (endorsed) status. Sil and Lorna are the first NNPs to graduate from the NNP program at the Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne. They both possess determination, perseverance, and passion for the care of newborns and their families. We are lucky to have them as leaders in our clinical team.

Dr Jennifer Dawson

Neonatal Nurse Research
Clinical Trial coordinator
The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne



Australian Capital Territory Branch

VALE Judith Smith

Dear ACNN family,

After a long illness our extraordinary colleague and to many of us, dear friend, Judith Smith passed away on 2 March 2020.



Judith started her neonatal nursing career in the Grace Ward at the Children's Hospital in Camperdown, Sydney and quickly established herself as a preceptor and mentor for many of the new nurses. She had an enquiring mind and sought out opportunities to expand her knowledge. She quickly embraced the direction

taken in Grace to commence NIDCAP training. During her training years she worked on research projects using NIDCAP as a methodology for various interventions. She was a strong advocate for NIDCAP; this stemmed from her desire and interest in helping families. She undertook a Clinical Neonatal Nursing Research Fellowship examining sleep as a way of supporting families when they took their babies home. She pushed the boundaries of convention and could be stubborn when things were not to her liking. She is fondly remembered by many nurses and doctors in Grace as an expert neonatal nurse whose family was her first concern.

Judith joined our Canberra NICU team after working in Sydney for more than 20 years. Her NIDCAP training and experience guided our team in all aspects of neurodevelopmental care. Judith gave her time generously; organising education programs and mentoring our staff in all aspects of neurodevelopmental and family centred care. She embraced new ideas and change, often developing innovative ways to engage staff and families in neonatal care. She loved Christmas; we will remember her bright Christmas tops and her meticulous organisation of Christmas gifts for babies and their families. During her last three years as a member of our team she took on the NICUS Audit Nurse role with the same unwavering dedication we were so used to seeing in every task she accomplished. It was a badge of honour to receive a chocolate frog from Judith for excellent documentation.

Over the past two years Judith has fought her greatest fight with courage, humility and unwavering care for the people around her. Our thoughts and prayers are extended to Judith's son Nicholas and her extended family.

Rest in peace Judith

Margaret Broom and Kaye Spence AM

Neurodevelopmental Care SIG

Interview with Dr Pamela Douglas, 20 January 2020

A community based approach to neuroprotective developmental care

Dr Pamela Douglas is the founder of the Neuroprotective Developmental Care (NDC) program, also known as the Possums Programs for Mothers and Babies. The not-for-profit organisation was founded in 2011.

Pamela has been a general practitioner since 1987. She is an Adjunct Associate Professor with the Transforming Maternity Care Collaborative, Griffith University, and a Senior Lecturer in the Discipline of General Practice at The University of Queensland. Pamela has multiple special interests, including the care of new families, mental health, and women's health. She is a published author and has affiliations with many professional bodies. Pamela holds, amongst other certificates and awards, the International Board Certificate for Lactation Consultancy.

Through the findings of her research, Pamela strongly promotes a transformation in the way health professionals address the complexity of unsettled infant behaviour. Her program offers evidence based clinical strategies to support parents and infants in terms of neuroprotective developmental care.

Dr Pamela Douglas has met many parents who had been experiencing challenging times with their newborn infants when first at home. The most common challenges identified by Pamela were in areas such as breastfeeding, sleeping, settling, fussing and crying. Through her research and clinical experience, Pamela realised the amount of conflicting, sometimes incorrect, information parents received, or researched for themselves, was often leading to an elevation of existing problems rather than helping to solve issues. Opinion based practice, rather than evidence based practice was found to be part of the problem. This is very relevant as breast feeding or feeding issues and unsettled infant behaviour are associated with an increased risk for postnatal depression. Pamela emphasises the non-judgemental approach to feeding offered through the program.

Sleep training and responsive settling is another area in question; particularly, how it is practised. Recognising what are normal sleep behaviours and addressing excessive patterns of night waking, supporting healthy alignment of the babies' sleep regulators with parents' sleep regulators, is at the heart of the Possums Sleep Program.

For these reasons, Pamela identified a need for the program in order to educate parents as well as health professionals in the provision of age appropriate Neuroprotective Developmental Care strategies. The sensory domain of these programs is acknowledging the importance of positively enriched experiences, particularly in the first 100 days of an infant's life.

The program offers health professionals a wide range of educational opportunities. Training is offered online as well as face-to-face during the Possum's Masterclass workshops. Upcoming masterclass workshops are held in April 2020 in Alice Springs and at the Annual Possum's Conference in October in northern NSW.

By completing an educational pathway, including the masterclass, the opportunity does exist for health professionals to gain Neuroprotective Developmental Care accreditation and become a Neuroprotective Developmental Care practitioner. As practitioners there is the possibility to be linked to parents who are looking for support and education within the framework of the Possums program.

The parental educational avenue consists of four domains:

1. Breastfeeding, or breastfeeding challenges
2. Crying and fussing
3. Sleep
4. Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Parents can join the Possums Integrated Perinatal Peer Support (PIPPS) parent program and receive evidence-based information on the above areas, and become a part of an online parent community where information can be shared. Tuition is provided via videos and easy to read guides. The information is conducted by trained parent mentors as well as experts in the field, such as lactation specialists, mental health practitioners and Dr Douglas herself.

The ACT content of the program can be sourced through freely available video recordings and online links to multiple resources. The therapy has a focus on good mental health for parents caring for newborn infants.

The underlying goal of the program is to promote the best outcome and wellbeing for babies and their families. Families can be referred to the program and many resources are freely available on the website, others will involve a small fee in order to access the information.

I feel this is a very comprehensive program addressing the importance of a well-functioning parent-infant-dyad, applying neuroprotective developmental care strategies. There is more and more evidence highlighting the important role positive and nurturing experiences have for the development of optimal brain architecture in the infant, in particular in the first 2000 days of life. This program seems to address exactly this.

In reflection I opened my mind to the fact that neuroprotective developmental care is not limited to the newborn intensive care unit (NICU), but rather has to be considered for all infants. I also believe neuroprotective developmental care should not end at the discharge from the NICU, and hopefully doesn't, however there are many preterm babies who do not meet the criteria for limited follow up programs.

Cont. on page 4

NDC SIG (cont.)

Information about the neuroprotective developmental care program, "The Possums Programs", can be found under <https://possumsonline.com>

If anyone would like to comment on the above you can reach me at ndcsig@acnn.org.au

I would like to thank Dr Pamela Douglas and her team for the amazing work they do and for the time Dr Douglas spent talking with me. Thank you very much.

Ursula Haack

Chair NDC SIG, ACNN



Call for Applications **Closing next 31 March**

ACNN members are invited to apply for the Neurodevelopmental Care Scholarship for the following categories:

1. Neuroprotective developmental care focussed courses/workshop attendance
2. Neuroprotective developmental care conference/seminar attendance

See the [ACNN website](#) for full details – under the Scholarship tab

Neonatal Nursing Research SIG

Just a quick hello to ACNN members from the Research SIG!

Monthly Research SIG Committee Meetings

During 2020 all monthly Research SIG committee meetings will be open to members. At these meetings we plan to provide research education and networking opportunities for SIG members. Each month there will be a new topic which be advertised on the ACNN Facebook. We look forward to meeting new members each month; if you have a topic of interest please send the SIG committee a quick email.

Annual meeting Canberra 2020

Planning is in progress for a breakfast session at the ACNN annual conference. The breakfast session will be about working towards publication. Stay tuned for an outline in April! The Research SIG will also be holding a concurrent session.

We are delighted to have Professor Denise Harrison as our guest speaker. If you would like advice or a little assistance in writing an abstract, putting a presentation or poster together, the Research SIG Committee is always keen to support ACNN members.

Spotlight on Australian neonatal nursing researchers

In this newsletter I have the pleasure of welcoming Professor Denise Harrison back to Australia! I am sure you will all be as excited as I am to hear about her travels and the research topic she leads: Be Sweet to Babies.

I look forward to meeting or hearing from you!

Margaret Broom

Research SIG Chair

Neonatal Nurse Researcher

Denise Harrison

Denise Harrison recently moved from Ottawa, Canada, to take up a position as Professor of Nursing at the University of Melbourne. Before moving back to Melbourne, she had been working as the Chair in Nursing Care of Children, Youth and Families at the University of Ottawa and Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), Canada since 2011.

Denise developed and leads the *Be Sweet to Babies* program of research which focuses on improving pain management for neonates, infants and young children in partnership with parents, clinicians, interdisciplinary researchers and trainees. Her research encompasses primary research (determining effective pain management strategies for sick and healthy infants and young children), knowledge synthesis (systematic reviews of interventions, as well as innovative synthesis of YouTube videos) and knowledge translation, including exploring innovative ways to translate knowledge into clinical practice locally, nationally and globally.

Her parent-targeted YouTube videos show ease and effectiveness of performing heel lancing or venepuncture while babies are being breastfed, held skin-skin and given sucrose (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L43y0H6XEh4&feature=youtu.be>).

Based on an assessment of barriers reported by nurses to using the evidence in clinical practice, her team went back to the drawing board and produced another video highlighting best ergonomics for performing heel lancing while the babies were being breastfed or held skin-skin. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpZNwP7bnkg&feature=youtu.be>).

Denise now looks forward to being home in Melbourne after almost a decade in Ottawa and establishing new and re-establishing existing partnerships with the aim of improving outcomes for babies, children and their families.



Announcement

The Molly Wardaguga Research Centre was established in April 2019 and is named in honour of an Aboriginal elder and Senior Aboriginal Health Worker from Arnham Land, who was a strong advocate for returning health services to Aboriginal control and Aboriginal communities. Molly was an important contributor to the Australian discourse regarding the importance of Birthing on Country. Her work and mentoring in Aboriginal health and research, and maternal and infant health in particular, has galvanised many advocate to improve maternity services for Indigenous Australians.

Building on more than 25 years of research, the centre will target the first 2000 days, from conception to age five. They will work side-by-side with communities and stakeholders to co-design services to give communities greater control, redesign maternal and infant health services for the best start in life for mothers and babies.

Co-Directors of the centre are Professor Sue Kildea and Associate Professor Yvette Roe. Sue is internationally recognised as a midwifery leader with expertise in maternity service redesign and Aboriginal health. Yvette grew up in Darwin. She is a Njikenawu woman from the West Kimberly region with more than 20 years' experience working in the Indigenous health sector.

"Birth is our first ceremony; we come in; we leave our mothers; we have connection to culture, to land and to protocol. The whole process is so important and we are going to value and respect that through our processes at the Research Centre," Ms Roe said.

The research team has members based in Brisbane, Darwin, Sydney and Nowra and aims to positively impact health outcomes for women and babies in the Northern Territory and Australia-wide, addressing the social determinants of health such as education, training and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The team has a strong track record, with more than 20 currently funded projects, including the Indigenous Birthing in an Urban Setting study (IBUS), the Building On Our Strengths project (BOOSt), the Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program (ANFPP) and many other national and international collaborations.

Molly's vision to support women's cultural and birthing aspirations, especially those living in remote locations, will endure through the Molly Wardaguga Research Centre. The Centre is an initiative of the Charles Darwin University.

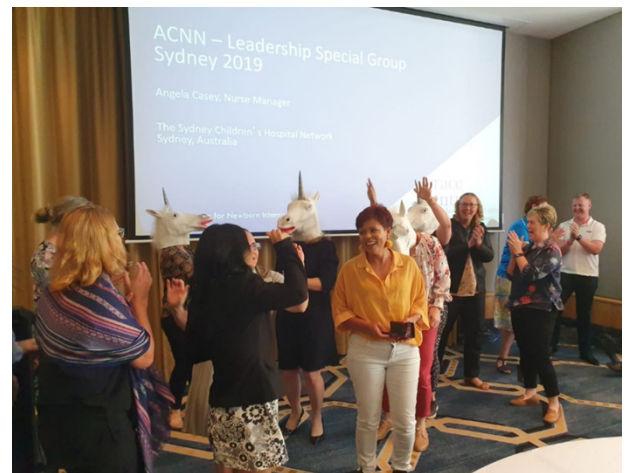
Neonatal Nursing Leadership SIG

At the ACNN Academic Scholar tour in Sydney, November 2019, the Leadership SIG burst into the after-lunch session with a (hilarious) dance and a compelling message of being brave. The presentation was led by Angela Casey, who has led the Leadership SIG since its inception in 2015 and has championed the significance of leadership and its impact on neonatal nursing growth and development. Angela reflected on the SIG's achievements and challenges over the last four years before stepping down as Chair of the SIG. Angela, thank you for modelling bravery and for the immense work undertaken in exploring how leadership is perceived within the neonatal environment.

Moving forward, the Leadership SIG seeks to build on this body of work and equip its members in understanding what leadership is outside of a specified role or title and practical ways to mentor others within the clinical environment. A Leadership SIG workshop focusing on these capabilities was scheduled for 20 May at the Royal Women's and Children's Hospital, Brisbane but has had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. More details to come when an alternative date is set.

Dustylee Williams

A/NUM Neonatal Unit
Sunshine Coast University Hospital



Low Resource Countries Scholarship

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Call for Applications

Next round closes 31 March 2020

ACNN members are invited to apply for an LRC Scholarship in the following categories:

1. Present or attend a conference being held in a low resource country
2. Workshop, short course or training applicable to low resource countries
3. Postgraduate studies applicable to low resource county context
4. Quality improvement/small research projects in collaboration with local staff in a low resource country context

Full details available on [ACNN website](#) under scholarship tab. |

Neonatal Nurse Practitioner SIG

Parliamentary Breakfast

On 3 December I had the privilege of representing ACNN at a Parliamentary Breakfast where the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) launched a timely White Paper, "A New Horizon for Health Service: Optimizing Advanced Practice Nursing". A paper that charts a course for health service improvement. It addresses gaps in sectors of the Australian population that are under-served in terms of timely, equitable access to health care. The solution proposed by the ACN is the senior nursing workforce that is underutilised and a ready-and-eager solution. The White Paper is available for viewing on the ACN website www.acn.edu.au under the Policy tab.

The breakfast was attended by 100 invited stakeholders representing all Australian states and territories. We shared our breakfast table with three members of parliament: Greg Hunt - Minister of Health, Chris Bowen - Shadow Minister of Health and Richard Di Natale - leader of the Greens Party. While we ate fresh fruit, yoghurt, and a very Aussie 'smashed avo' breakfast, Christine Duffield (ACN President) discussed the contents of the White Paper.

Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) make up 9 per cent of the total nursing workforce with over 26,000 clinicians Australia wide, nursing experts who practice autonomously within the registered nurses' scope of practice and are well respected by the healthcare consumer and other healthcare professionals. APNs are currently underutilised and not practicing to their full scope, which is inhibiting the consumer's access to healthcare,

particularly in rural and remote areas of Australia. The White Paper recommends optimising the utilisation of APNs with a reform of health service models and health workforce structures. It urges the Australian government to actively explore the potential of APNs for improving the quality of health care and reform current healthcare funding models and making long-term reform changes to optimise the Australian nursing workforce.

Greg Hunt commended the ACN on the paper and described the respect he has for the nursing profession, given his mother and wife are nurses he felt a special connection with the audience. He went on to endorse the White Paper and looked forward to an ongoing collaboration with the ACN and the nurses of the Australia. Chris Bowen and Richard Di Natale echoed the sentiments of the Minister of Health.

The Parliamentary Breakfast was an inspiring experience. It gave me the opportunity to network with APNs from a variety of specialities from all over Australia. I left the breakfast both full of 'smashed avo' and pride in my profession. I recognise that change takes time but I feel the White Paper is the first step in promoting the APN role and hopefully bringing the role to the forefront when policies are being written and gaps in healthcare being addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent the ACNN.

Jo Scott NNP

NNP SIG Treasurer



Sign up a new member to win!!!

For each new member you sign up*, you will receive an entry into the draw to win one of two \$700 prizes towards attending ACNN Conference in 2020 or 2021⁵

The more you recruit the more chances you have to WIN

AND the new member* goes into a draw to win reimbursement of their membership fee

Applies to member sign ups from 19 January to 31 May 2020

*resides in qld, joining fee is paid and application approved

Australian College of Neonatal Nurses

www.acnn.org.au



ACNN NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2020 COLLABORATION, CULTURE AND CARING

2-4 September 2020, Canberra

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS NOW OPEN

You are invited to submit an abstract to be presented at the ACNN National Conference as either an oral presentation or poster. We welcome abstracts related to the field of neonatal care and neonatal nursing.

Key themes:

- Indigenous health
- Perinatal mental health
- Stillbirth

Topics include but are not limited to:

- Clinical care
- Communication
- Families
- Technology and innovation

Abstracts may be:

- Case studies
- Clinical practice or quality improvement activities
- Literature reviews
- Original research

> SUBMIT AN ABSTRACT

**REGISTRATION
OPENS
FEBRUARY
2020**

**EARLY BIRD
CLOSES
20 JULY
2020**

**ABSTRACTS
CLOSE
30 APRIL
2020**

Need assistance? Contact our Conference Organiser: Abercrombie Management
email: acnn@abercrombiemanagement.com.au or call: 02 4905 0632