



ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH  
AUSTRALIA

Tasmanian Newsletter October 2012

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*Message from the State President*

*'Decision Making Skills.....'*

Colleagues,

We all use our decision making skills to solve problems by selecting a course of action from several possible alternatives. Our decision making skills also impacts on the effectiveness of our time management. Sometimes making decisions can be difficult. Almost every decision made will be associated with conflict or dissatisfaction. Ideally the positive elements of a chosen solution should outweigh the negative impacts.

Avoiding decisions often seems easier yet making your own decisions, and accepting the consequences, is the only way to stay in control of your responsibilities, your time and your life. The key to effective decision making is -

- **Identify the purpose of your decision:** what exactly is the problem to be solved?
- **Gather information:** what factors does the problem involve?
- **Identify the principles to judge the alternatives:** what standards and judgement criteria should the solution meet?
- **Brainstorm and list the possible choices:** work through the outcome scenarios that each choice presents.
- **Evaluate the consequences of the choices available:** use your standards and judgement criteria to determine the most desirable outcome.
- **Determine the best choice.**
- **Implement the decision:** transform your mental decision into specific implementation steps.
- **Evaluate the outcomes from your decision:** what lessons can be learnt to make better decisions in the future?

In everyday life we often have to make decisions on-the-run and without enough time to systematically go through the above-listed dot points. In these instances the most effective decision making strategy is to focus on your goals and let your intuition lead you to the right choice.

Mark Dwyer  
State President

*A DAY OF WORRY IS MORE EXHAUSTING THAN A WEEK OF WORK.*

*John Lubbock*

## 2012 STATE CONFERENCE

Kingston town and the idyllic Derwent River formed the almost perfect backdrop for our conference *'Environmental Health: Making A Difference'* held at the Southern Lights Hotel. The standard of the conference and the quality of speakers raised the bar higher than before.

**Dr Graham Bury**, the Kingborough Mayor, formally welcomed delegates and reflected on his past as a young doctor when public health wasn't the sexiest profession to get involved in at the time but he agreed that times had certainly changed for the better.

**Dr Roscoe Taylor**, Director of Public Health, officially opened the conference and reaffirmed that the role of public and environmental health is to keep making a positive difference to communities.

**Dr Kelly Shaw**, Medical Director, provided the keynote address with a comprehensive review of current state and local public and environmental health actions highlighting the importance of our activities in making a difference. These issues included public health reporting, tobacco reforms, air quality, child care, temporary food stalls, food auditing, unhealthy premises and school immunisation programs.

**Dr Anne Astin PSM**, the first keynote speaker, provided a broad overview of the food regulation system in Australia and the mechanisms for the translation of decisions and outcomes down through the jurisdictions and finally to local government. Relevant and key issues for local government such as the challenges of implementing a food grading system in local government and programs like 'Scores On Doors' remain on the national agenda. (EHA is making a concerted effort to find a place at the Food Regulation Implementation Sub-Committee table).

**Julie Williams**, Manager Physical Activity & Community Nutrition, reviewed the state's food security network, identified where local EHOs could play more prominent roles in their communities in relation to these issues and provided clarity of food security language used.

**Howrah Plumbing** was a major conference sponsor and Neil Saunders presented on the Fuji Clean on-site waste water treatment and disposal system.

**Julie Dunbabin**, Tas School Canteen Association, was the first of our GTK (Get To Know) presenters and provided an overview of their organisation and identified essential and potential linkages with local EHOs concerning school canteens, nutrition, food safety and education.

**Associate Professor Stella Stevens**, UTas, gave a dynamic and challenging GTK presentation on the proposed new Masters in Public Health course currently under consideration for development. EHOs were challenged to undertake the new qualification and then to challenge the state's politicians to effect realistic changes to improve the health status of Tasmania!

**Miriam Herzfeld**, public health consultant, concluded Day 1 and examined the social determinants of health and highlighted their relevance to national, state and local governments from a community health aspect.

The delegates staying at the venue attended a casual GTK dinner in the restaurant where it was revealed that one of our colleagues meets the entry requirements to join Mensa!!

**Alan Humphreys**, Workplace Standards, started Day Two and presented on plumbing and wastewater issues of relevance and importance to local government and generated much discussion with several of the delegates.

**Technical Tour 1**, a visit to the *Green Star* rated Kingston High School, was a worthwhile experience as it revealed many environmentally sustainable features of the school buildings, classrooms and general infrastructure. Surely a blueprint for future energy efficient school buildings.

**Hollie Zimmermann**, Glenorchy City Council, gave a intriguing case study of their pursuit of an illegal backyard tattooist. The steps that were taken by the EHOs to finally achieve a positive result was quite exceptional and it was a story well worth hearing. There are many lessons for us resulting from the efforts of Hollie and her colleagues. The level of applause at the conclusion of Hollie's presentation reflected the admiration the delegates had for the EHO's efforts involved in this case.

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## 2012 STATE CONFERENCE CONT'D

**Technical Tour 2**, following lunch at the Home Hill Winery, was to the Tassal Salmon Hatchery in the Huon Valley. It was most interesting to see the various stages of salmon growth in the hatchery through to the on-site treatment and reuse of waste. A first class cutting edge Tasmanian industry.

The **Conference Dinner** was preceded by a complimentary drinks session during which the delegates arrived in their vintage themed dress. Highlights of the dinner, which was sponsored by Howrah Plumbing, included the following -

- Gold Medal Award for 2011—Melissa Burn (Launceston City Council).
- Best Dressed Female—Hollie Zimmermann (Glenorchy City Council).
- Best Dressed Male—John Devries (Kingborough Council).
- Who's Who Winner—Karen Welsh (Devonport City Council).
- General Quiz Winners—the RED table.

**Nina Bertram**, the second keynote speaker, started Day Three with a dramatic presentation on the Queensland floods and her frontline experience as the EHO-on-the-spot in the Lockyer Valley. Nina's public health emergency management training and the EHA little red booklet '*Emergency Public Health*' were invaluable in helping Nina to cope and make the right decisions during this unprecedented emergency situation. Nina was kept busy during morning tea fielding questions and points of discussion from many delegates.

**Kristy Blackburn**, EPA, and **Kristina Paul**, Hobart City Council, then jointly presented on the Burn Brighter Project that was trialled during the winter months in a nominated suburb in Hobart. Air quality measurements were taken and specific point sources of woodsmoke pollution were proactively targeted with education material aimed at reducing smoke emissions through the education of woodsmoke users. The Project was successful in many respects and did achieve a reduction in local smoke emissions.

**Andrew Thomson**, Think ST Solutions, focused on food safety issues particularly the frustration faced by EHOs when assessing the skills and knowledge of food handlers and the lack of tools available to assist the food industry in maintaining acceptable standards of cleanliness and hygiene in food businesses. Andrew talked to a variety of tools that his company has developed to assist both industry and regulators better manage these issues.

**Dr Ingrid van der Mei**, Public Health Association Australia, provided insight into her organisation as well as the identified synergies with EHA in another GTK session.

**Rebecca Essex**, Health Promotion Coordinator, explained about the formation and function of the Health Promotion Community of Practice that has been established in the south of the state in the final GTK session.

**Kerry Nettle**, Public Health Nurse, wrapped up the conference with her much anticipated detailed discussion on the forthcoming changes to the school based immunisation program commencing next year.

Jeff McNamara won the delegates registration prize (wine, camembert & crackers).

More conference photos available to view on the new website soon!

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## MEMBER'S PAGE

### Board Meeting—Thursday 2nd August 2012

The below outcomes resulted following discussion of agenda items -

- **Proposed EHO training workshop (food/water sampling):** Awaiting detailed cost analysis for the development and presentation of materials from UTas prior to any further action being considered.
- **Newsletters:** Agreed that newsletters be issued only to members and students. All other EHOs to be kept informed of EHA professional development events such as seminars, conferences, etc.
- **Student representative:** Agreed that a new student representative to replace Glenys Nicholls be pursued following the 2012-2013 membership renewal period.
- **State conference:** The sponsorships and speakers program were discussed and agreed upon.
- **Member registration rates:** It was discussed and agreed that conference registration rates for members would not be increased this year.
- **Teleconference meeting duration:** It was discussed and agreed that the duration of Board teleconference meetings be extended to 1.5 hours in duration to enable all agenda items to be adequately addressed.
- **December professional development seminar:** The proposed program for the next seminar was considered and approved.
- **EHA scholarships:** Following much discussion and consideration it was agreed that we commit to the UTas scholarship program pending receipt of additional details from UTas concerning the program.

### Annual General Meeting—Thursday 4th October 2012

In summary, the AGM was well attended and held in the conference venue lounge prior to the conference dinner. The President's Report was tabled as was the Executive Officer's Report. Our Executive Officer, Margaret Hind, hopes to be able to attend our conference next year.

The Auditor's Report, containing details of the state's financials, was then tabled. The outcomes from the Board nominations were declared—there was no need to hold elections this year. The nominated Board members for 2012-2103 are -

- Mark Dwyer
- Alex Woodward
- Glenys Nicholls
- Stuart Heggie
- Ron Fry

The minutes of the AGM should be accessible on the new EHA website in the near future.

### THANKS TO MEMBERS WE NOW HAVE EHA SCHOLARSHIPS

Some people still procrastinate over committing to become financial members of EHA. They ask questions like "*What do I get for my money?*" and "*What's in it for me?*" These are fair and reasonable questions to ask indeed.

EHA's commitment in providing scholarships for students enrolled in the UTas EH degree course is a great example of where some of the membership funds are directed. Through this initiative EHA, and its members, are unashamedly investing in the future of the environmental health profession in Tasmania. Without a sound financial membership base EHA would not be in a position to ever consider making such a commitment. The Board is excited by this very positive decision taken on behalf of its members.

The Board is committed to investigate and assess any opportunity that could benefit the profession and, of course, its members. In this regard the Board is also committed to improving and expanding the benefits for individual members.

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

### Erased Bar Code

The Colombus Dispatch  
13 Aug. 2012

Ten Dublin students have been awarded a \$250,000 contract, after winning a national science competition, to develop an erasable bar code—a product they hope to see on packaged meat at food outlets. When the food's temperature rises above 5°C, the point at which bacteria begin to thrive, time sensitive ink begins to flow towards the bar code. After 2 hours above this temperature the ink flows into the chamber covering the bar code and rendering it unreadable. This ensures the product cannot be scanned and purchased for consumption. The whole process is irreversible which means the product cannot be refrigerated again or resold.

### Safer Food Being Served Up

NSWFA  
3 Sept. 2012

Food safety standards in retail and foodservice outlets across NSW increased significantly during 2010-2011. The evaluation of the Food Regulation Partnership, between the NSWFA and local councils, revealed that compliance rates in food businesses increased to 94%. Inspection targets are now being met by local councils with officers enforcing compliance with the NSW food safety laws. According to the Minister for Primary Industries the boost in food safety standards can be attributed to increased surveillance and the activity of council officers and programs such as the Scores On Doors program, the Name & Shame register and the Food Safety Supervisor program which assist in getting the food safety and hygiene message out to food businesses.

### Dead Rat In Restaurant

Courier Mail  
3 Sept. 2012

An Indian restaurant in King's Cross has been fined almost \$100,000 after health officers found a dead rat and cockroaches in the kitchen. Last December, following a complaint, officers inspected the business and found rat faeces, food stored on the floor, accumulated dirt, grease encrusted equipment and a large dead rat behind a bin. The Sydney City Council launched legal proceedings against the restaurant alleging the owner had failed to maintain clean, sanitary and hygienic conditions as required. The owner pleaded guilty. Health officers stated that rats may have been nesting in the restaurant.

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Do you think that a 'Scores On Doors' type program should be introduced by the State Government in Tasmania?
- What do you think the main benefits could be, from a food safety perspective, of programs such as 'Scores On Doors'?
- What criteria would need to be met before you, or your council, would consider prosecuting a food business for failing to comply with the Food Safety Standards?
- Do your council's Improvement Notices clearly identify and explain the Food Safety Standard non-compliances of a business or do they tend to focus on providing detailed advice on how to address specific non-compliances? (Example, clean a particular fridge, repair a certain fly screen, etc).
- Do you think that Improvement Notices can be useful tools in improving the skills and knowledge of food proprietors and food handlers generally? If so, how could this be done?

If you would like to consider and discuss any of these issues further please contact Mark Dwyer at [dwyerm@hobartcity.com.au](mailto:dwyerm@hobartcity.com.au)



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## KEEPING UP TO DATE

### Who Is Where?

- **Natalie Rogers** from Hobart City Council has temporarily left on maternity leave after giving birth to Lewis Richard. Congratulations Natalie!
  - **Michael Westcott** is undertaking part time EHO work at Brighton Council.
  - **Alex Woodward** from Glenorchy City Council recently married his partner Jessica. Congratulations Alex!
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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

**5 DECEMBER 2012**

**THE GRANGE CAMPBELL TOWN      BBQ LUNCH INCLUDED**

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### EHA (Tas) Inc. Board Members

<b>State President:</b>	<b>Mark Dwyer</b>	<b><a href="mailto:dwyer@hobartcity.com.au">dwyer@hobartcity.com.au</a></b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Alex Woodward</b>	<b><a href="mailto:awoodward@gcc.tas.gov.au">awoodward@gcc.tas.gov.au</a></b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Jacci Viney</b>	<b><a href="mailto:jacci.viney@flinders.tas.gov.au">jacci.viney@flinders.tas.gov.au</a></b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Alison Duniam</b>	<b><a href="mailto:alison@dulverton.com.au">alison@dulverton.com.au</a></b>
<b>Board Members:</b>	<b>Ron Fry</b>	<b><a href="mailto:ronfry1@bigpond.com">ronfry1@bigpond.com</a></b>
	<b>Stuart Heggie</b>	<b><a href="mailto:stuart.heggie@dhhs.tas.gov.au">stuart.heggie@dhhs.tas.gov.au</a></b>
	<b>Doug Doherty</b>	<b><a href="mailto:doug.doherty@cmwater.com.au">doug.doherty@cmwater.com.au</a></b>
	<b>Glenys Nicholls</b>	<b><a href="mailto:glenysn@latrobe.tas.gov.au">glenysn@latrobe.tas.gov.au</a></b>

If you have an issue or suggestion that you would like the Board to consider or if you are interested in becoming a member of the Board, please feel free to contact a current Board member to discuss further.



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