



ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH
AUSTRALIA

Tasmanian Newsletter April 2013

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President's Message

Valuing Who You Are

When someone compliments you in your workplace, take notice and enjoy it—don't be uncomfortable about it and shrug it off. If you, or a member of your team, receive complimentary letters or emails from anyone why not create a 'Well Done Wall' in your work area and post the items on the Wall for all to see. When you are next feeling down or under appreciated visit the 'Well Done Wall' and trust the good judgement of those people that have given you written compliments.

In our role as (predominantly) local government regulators and enforcement officers public and personal compliments can be hard to come by, so value them dearly when you receive them! Don't forget to also value the role you play in maintaining and improving the public and environmental health standards of our local communities. As environmental health practitioners we are responsible for a significant range of environmental management issues as well as public and environmental health issues that all directly impact on the health and well being of local populations. We are the 'public health' champions for our communities—we are the ones that are qualified to do the job and to do it right. Suggestions occasionally arise from various sources that aspects of our existing environmental health responsibilities should or could be undertaken by other agencies. These are direct challenges to your integrity, credibility and capability. Value who you are, what you do and who you are doing it for and be prepared, when challenged, to stand up and defend your integrity, credibility and capability as well as your profession.

Mark Dwyer
State President

'It's a funny thing about life. If you refuse to accept anything but the very best you will often get it.'

W. Somerset Maugham

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR MARCH 2013

A lively group of participants arrived at The Grange on a perfect early autumn day to participate in the enHealth workshop presented by Jamie Wood and facilitated by Kim Willing.

The workshop was one of a series of 17 being conducted across the country. The intent is for enHealth to raise awareness amongst environmental health practitioners of its available publications and resources that it has recently upgraded or developed. Considerable time, effort and money has gone into developing the well researched documents utilizing experts in their respective fields.

The documents that were discussed included -

- Arthropod Pests
- Guidance on Use of Rainwater Tanks
- Environmental Health Risk Assessment Guidelines
- Asbestos in the Home
- Local Government Environmental Health Risk Resource '*Risky Business*'

Immediate feedback from the workshop participants indicated that the sessions were most informative and not technical in nature at all. The focus was mainly on the type of information contained within the documents and how the documents could be best utilized when dealing with customers and their situations. The information contained in the documents has already been researched by experts and is now readily available for referral and use by practitioners.

It was generally agreed that more widespread referral and use of these documents would help create more consistency amongst EH practitioners and ultimately achieve better outcomes.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR JUNE 2013

WEDNESDAY 26TH JUNE

**THE GRANGE FUNCTION CENTRE
CAMPBELL TOWN**

10.30am—3.00pm

Program Out Soon!

GET ON BOARD



International Federation of Environmental Health Asia-Pacific Regional Group

Environmental Health and Disaster Management Course

17-21 June 2013

Udayana University, Kampus Udayana Jimbaran, Badung-Bali, Indonesia.

In partnership with Indonesian Environmental Health Specialists Association (IEHSA).

Registration Information: www.ifeh.org



aspenmedical
wherever we're needed.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA

38TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

24—26 September 2013

Parmelia Hilton

Perth

Western Australia

- Pre Conference Workshops—Monday 23rd.
- Post Conference Workshop—Friday 27th.
- Incorporates World Environmental Health Day.

ADVANCE NOTICE AND CALL FOR PAPERS

The 2013 National Conference Committee is seeking appropriate papers on the following topics. The Committee will review papers for applicability to the field of environmental health, originality, current significance of topic, scope of interest and appeal to the profession and balance of theory and practical application.

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| • Improving Environmental Health Practice | • Risk Management & Risk Communication |
| • Environmental Health Workforce | • Emerging Technologies |
| • Environmental Health Impact Assessment | • Noise Control |
| • Enhancing Environmental Health Governance | • Global Warming & Renewable Energy |
| • Public Health Planning & Policy Development | • Food Safety |
| • Indigenous Environmental Health | • Allergies & Allergens |
| • Developments in Waste Management | • Epidemiological Surveillance & Environmental Health Indicators |
| • Hazardous Wastes/Contaminates Sites | • Communicable Diseases, Pathogens & Vector Control |
| • Environmental Management & Pollution Control | • Environmental Health Education & Training |
| • Water Quality & Catchment Management | • Occupational Health & Safety |
| • Wastewater Management & Reuse | |
| • Emergency & Recovery Management | |

Tas Board Meeting—Thursday 28th February 2013

The below outcomes resulted following discussion of agenda items -

Business Arising Actions:

- Action plan tasks were forwarded to Board members.
- Relevant only emails were tabled as correspondence.
- Specific budget line item query was resolved following discussion with Executive Officer.
- Current financial members list was forwarded to Board members.

Portfolio Action Plans:

- Agreed these action plans would be developed at the annual face-to-face meeting.

Events & Activities:

- Potential venues on Tasman Peninsula to be assessed for suitability for 2013 state conference.

Sponsorship:

- Reasonable advertising rates are now available on the national website for Tas event sponsors.

Calendar of Events:

- Draft document was reviewed for issue to all practicing EHOs and inclusion on national website.

Scholarships:

- Details of the inaugural recipient of the EHA scholarship are to be obtained from UTas to enable contact for potential student representation on the Board.
- DHHS scholarships to be promoted and offered to suitable mid year enrolments.

UTas Career Weeks:

- Corporate support packages offered by UTas are to be investigated for further consideration.



Our thanks go to Ron Fry, Melissa Burn and Jeff McNamara who attended the Launceston Campus of the University of Tasmania for the UTAS Careers Fair held on 19 March. It was an ideal opportunity to address potential students to the degree course albeit via web link. Jeff talked about the range of responsibilities and activities undertaken by EHOs; Melissa provided a trainee student's experience and perspective; Ron touched on the profession and the benefits of being a student member of EHA as well as the availability of scholarships, an accredited degree course and opportunities for ongoing professional development. The Board really appreciates the time taken by all three to provide this important message to future EHOs.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Third Listeria Death Linked to Australian Cheese Company

The Herald
10 Feb 2013

A third person has died following a listeria outbreak linked to soft cheeses produced in Victoria. Victoria's acting Chief Health Officer, Dr Michael Ackland, has confirmed the death of a 68 year old man from New South Wales in late January was linked to the listeria contamination of Jindi cheese products. An 84 year old Victorian man and a 44 year old Tasmanian man have also died of listeria infection. A pregnant NSW woman miscarried. More than 20 other cases have been reported.

Jindi has voluntarily recalled all batches of cheese manufactured up to January 6. Dr Ackland stated that the outbreak, which has been traced to the Jindi factory in Gippsland, was the largest the nation had suffered and one of the most complex. He described the process of tracking the outbreak to Jindi as an important piece of investigative work which involved obtaining food histories from victims and intelligence from OzFoodNet, as well as bacterial DNA tests to determine the strain of listeria.

The parent company for Jindi has voluntarily committed to a quality assurance program that significantly 'cranks up' its existing food safety standards and has satisfied Victoria's Chief Health Officer.

Food Poisoning Reported at World's Best Restaurant

Anstat Newsletter
8 March 2013

The Telegraph reports that 67 guests who dined at Danish restaurant Noma between 12 and 16 February 2013 became ill with food poisoning. The Australian reports that the restaurant, voted number one in the world by *Restaurant* magazine for the past three years, said that tests indicated the stomach bug norovirus was to blame. The norovirus was reportedly brought into the restaurant by a staff member. The Telegraph stated that a report by the Danish food authority investigating the food poisoning outbreak, following complaints from 63 customers, found that Noma failed to provide hot water in the taps that staff used to wash their hands and also failed to properly disinfect the kitchen before the virus had spread. The restaurant was reportedly given an official warning by the food authority and instructed to fund a follow up investigation.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- From a risk likelihood and consequence perspective, what level of risk would you rate following up a national food recall request involving listeria contaminated cheese products?
 - From a risk likelihood and consequence perspective, what level of risk would you rate investigating a gastro outbreak or food poisoning event at a food business?
 - If either of these requests arrived on your desk from DHHS how would you go about determining when, or whether, you would commence your investigation?
 - When inspecting and assessing food businesses, including temporary food outlets, do you check that there is soap, disposable towels and warm running water available at all wash hand basins?
 - When assessing staff practices in food businesses do you scrutinise whether, and how, the wash hand basins are utilised by food handlers?
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Keeping Up To date

Who Is Where?

- **Calvin Marais** has left Hobart City Council and returned to Queensland.
 - **Karen Marais** has left Glenorchy City Council and returned to Queensland.
 - **Tracey Wright** has been appointed by Clarence City Council as a permanent/part time EHO.
 - **Linda Sznytka** has left Launceston City Council.
 - **Peter McCarthy** has left Glenorchy City Council.
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STATE CONFERENCE

‘Environmental Health: A Risky Business’

4th—6th September 2013

FOX & HOUNDS INN

ARTHUR HIGHWAY

PORT ARTHUR

EHA (Tas) Inc. Board Members

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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.