

TWCA Conference Report

by Margaret Clarke

The 2005 TWCA conference was held on September 23rd and 24th at Hadley's Hotel in Hobart. Around 150 people attended many health care professions including podiatrists, pharmacists, doctors and staff from varying areas of nursing.

This year's conference theme was "Indulge and Rejuvenate" and although this theme obviously guided the content of talks by the speakers, many delegates were pleasantly surprised by the extent to which the concept of "indulging and rejuvenating" was extended to them! On arrival delegates not only found the usual product material in their product bags, but also decadent chocolates, soap, fruit juice, tea/coffee as well as bath salts or bubble bath. All at the conference were also treated to variety of pleasant displays and experiences.

The presentations by the keynote speakers on the Thursday evening were followed by a cocktail party which included an Intimo Lingerie parade (not too revealing!) and displays of quality jewellery designed and made by TWCA member Jenny Mills. This proved to be very popular – it was great to see people showing off their "Jenny Mills originals" on the next day of the conference. We were also graced by the presence of a very glamorous Kathy Canning from the RHH wound clinic, sporting the latest looks in wound care fashion, including a gold glo-mesh skirt, tiara, belly dancing belt and a four-layer pressure bandage to her left leg to top off the outfit. At anytime people could make an appointment to be pampered in the upstairs "indulgent room". Karan Spilling from "My Place" and Collen offered manicures, massages and nail painting to delegates and found themselves booked out over the two days.

This fun did not take anything away from the fabulous trade displays set up by nineteen companies at the conference. We were there of course to take the opportunity to learn all we could about latest products, concepts and research in wound care, and the company representatives present at the conference did a wonderful job in supplying information and samples to all of those interested.

Highlights of the conference were the wonderful talks given by the speakers at the conference. Our keynote speakers were Professor Donald MacLellan and Jan Rice. Professor MacLellan spoke about wound bed preparation and management. The preparation of the wound bed was emphasized as being crucial to healing and included techniques in reducing bacterial load and in debridement. In speaking on the management of wounds Professor MacLellan outlined the issues facing Australia today, in regard to the expectations Australians have of health care, and the responsibility health care workers have to implement optimal wound care in order to deliver optimal healing rates.

Jan Rice, who is well known in Australian wound care, spoke about her incredible work in Banda Aceh. Jan found herself spending her long service leave managing horrendous injuries in tropical heat in some of the most inhospitable terrain of Aceh. This is not how

most of us would imagine indulging ourselves, however Jan emphasized the rejuvenation that occurred within herself due to her experience of giving so much of herself and her knowledge to the local people, thus regaining perspective in her life, and inspiring many of us at the conference to at least rethink our own perspectives of what is important in our lives. I was amazed, talking to people after the conference, at how many people were profoundly affected by Jan's talks.

Many other interstate and local speakers spoke on subjects such as laval therapy, the use of honey in wound healing, creating web pages for wound care, the Graduate Certificate in Wound Care, neuropathic foot ulceration, the RCNA, and writing for publication.

Our novice presenters gave wonderful presentations and were very well received. Congratulations to Kate Cassidy and Cheryl Wilson who share the prize for the best novice presenter. Kate gave a very informative talk entitled Smoking and its effects on wound healing "where indulgence doesn't equal rejuvenation". Cheryl presented a case study which demonstrated how careful planning using holistic care brought about a positive outcome for a complex medical patient. Congratulations also to Jeremy Wright who won the TWCA logo competition. You can all look forward to seeing Jeremy's new TWCA logo design on future TWCA publications!

Overall, the 2005 TWCA conference was extremely informative, a lot of fun, and certainly worth attending. Everything was well thought out – from the food and entertainment to the programme and trade and everything in between. I'd like to thank the TWCA committee for doing such a fabulous job in organizing this event, Sutherland Medical for being the major sponsor for the conference. I'd also like to thank all those who participated in the running of the conference, as well as all those who attended – we had delegates from all parts of Tasmania and even interstate. I'm sure we'll all look forward the next conference in Launceston in 2006.