

# ASAE-news

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF ANAESTHETISTS EMAIL NEWSLETTER



December 08



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## Recognition of Members

I am very pleased to start my final e-news for the year by highlighting two members' recent recognition for their achievements. Dr Martin Culwick who developed and now manages iamonline as well as providing key advice as the Medical Director to the Australian and New Zealand Tripartite Anaesthesia Data Committee – I know, a very long title – was appointed Adjunct Professor of IT at the Queensland University of Technology on 1 December.

The new GASACT Chair, Dr Amanda Young, was awarded the Dr Ray Hader Trainee Award for Compassion by ANZCA on 13 December for helping trainees cope with stress.

Congratulations to both Martin and Amanda for providing vital assistance to our anaesthesia colleagues!

## National Registration and Accreditation – The Trojan Horse

Each day many of my colleagues' – both anaesthetic and non-anaesthetic – ask me these questions:

- "So what is the problem with national registration?"
- "Why are the ASA, the AMA and other professional associations so concerned?"
- "Surely we want to be able to move from state to state easily?"

National registration and accreditation does mean recognition in each state – but what else is contained within the "fine print"?



Image of Trojan Horse courtesy of GoGap – Flickr  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gogap/253649673/>

Unfortunately if executed in its current form it is likely to result in:

#### Decline in standards

Registration will provide a direct legislative link to Medicare and pharmaceutical benefits for patients of all registered health professions. Intuitively this puts patient outcomes, public health initiatives and evidence based medicine as the secondary outcomes.

#### Devaluation of Australian qualifications

Medical education would no longer be independent of government, putting at risk the overseas recognition of our training and also the attraction of international students to seek medical education here. Further our medical education will no longer measure up to international standards as set down by the World Health Organization.

#### Task substitution

In certain circumstances the National Medical Board will be able to register a person who does not meet the standard requirements for registration simply to meet workforce or some other perceived requirement.

#### Lack of transparency and professional exclusion

There is insufficient accountability for Ministerial decisions and policy directions, particularly when those decisions are inconsistent with advice provided by the professional board or the independent accrediting body.

#### Denial of natural justice

The complaints process may deny the right to natural justice. The proposed legislation will allow "a single committee (to) carry out multiple statutory functions spanning the registration, investigation and disciplinary functions, either at the national or local levels".

#### Increased costs to you

The national system will be effectively brought in over the top of existing systems – providing an extra layer rather than a replacement. This will add another cost impost that registrants will be paying.

If you want none of the above then lobby your Premiers, Health Ministers and local members who will be deciding the fate of all aspects of health care in Australia.

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### St Vincent's Private Hospital, Sydney Notification

In November St Vincent's Private Sydney lodged an exclusive dealing notification for third line forcing conduct with the ACCC. The proposed conduct required that in most cases accreditation at St Vincent's Public Hospital was a precondition for accreditation at St Vincent's Private (SVPH). The ASA was requested to comment on this notification with regard to the public benefit of such a notification and its effects on competition. The Society concluded that there was no evidence of public benefit and that there would be a reduction in competition through this arrangement.

This notification initiated by the administration of SVPH resulted in a number of submissions from both individuals and professional bodies. All submissions may be viewed [here](#)

The ACCC is yet to make its determination on this matter.

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## Economic Update

Recently, perhaps as a result of additional Federal funding specifically directed at reducing public hospital waiting lists, there appears to have been a resurgence in the prevalence of public hospital patients undergoing medical treatment in private hospitals. The ASA's advice to members on [privately treated public patients](#) as well as the appropriate items numbers for [call backs and epidurals](#) has been prepared by Dr Andrew Mulcahy via these links.

The newly updated Relative Value Guide (RVG) was posted to all members in late November. It is distinguishable by its unique 75th Anniversary cover for the 11th edition. Members will be aware that Medicare Australia has ceased distribution of the printed version of the MBS making the RVG even more useful. It has considerable additional information on health funds and informed financial consent. If you do not have your copy yet please let us know.

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## Do you Enjoy Photography?

We are looking for anaesthesia-related photos for our publications.

For more information please contact Avril Cronk at the ASA HQ on 02) 9327 4022 or send your photos to [acronk@fed.asa.org.au](mailto:acronk@fed.asa.org.au)

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## Upcoming Events

It is never too early to start your planning for the ASA's 68th National Scientific Congress. We are looking forward to the NSC which this year will be held at the Darwin Convention Centre from 5 to 8 September 2009. Don't forget to submit your abstract for presentation as a free paper or poster by 6 February 2009. More information on the ASA National Scientific Congress can be found at [www.asa2009.com](http://www.asa2009.com)

For information on the Australian Symposium on Ultrasound and Regional Anaesthesia (ASURA), which will be held 20 to 23 November 2009 please click here [www.asura2009.anaesthesia.org.au](http://www.asura2009.anaesthesia.org.au)

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**I would like to take this opportunity to extend to all our members and families my best wishes for the Festive Season and a happy and fulfilling 2009.**