

## **Annual Report of the Scientific Secretary To The AOA AGM, 15 October 2008**

The role of the Scientific Secretary within the Australian Orthopaedic Association is of a dual nature. The Secretary assumes responsibility for the organisation and production of the Annual Scientific Meeting. Close links are also forged with the Continuing Orthopaedic Education subcommittee. The Secretary also occupies a Board position and contributes at a national level to the smooth functioning of the Association.

Over the last twelve months, there has been a number of innovations and developments worthy of reporting.

### 1. The Annual Scientific Meeting

There has been a number of structural changes which have been aimed at further enthusing the membership and bolstering the attendance at this important scientific forum.

#### *(a) Four Day Meeting*

Instead of spanning four and a half days and effectively blanking off an entire week from clinical practice or other activities, the programme has been contracted to four full days spanning the Monday to Thursday inclusive. This change has been based upon a genuine desire to attract more Fellows to the meeting and in the hope that they will attend for the entire duration of the meeting.

#### *(b) Super Wednesday*

The Wednesday in the Annual Scientific Meeting had sometimes been viewed as being a “dead rubber”. The Annual General Meeting was held in the morning and attendees would often have to depart the meeting room prematurely to catch transport to sporting venues for afternoon activities. To address this problem and to maintain continuity from the Monday through to the Thursday, the sporting activities have now been moved to the Thursday afternoon. Wednesday becomes “a super day”. The Subspecialty Showcase occupies the first session before morning tea.

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All subspecialties within the Association have been approached and have nominated a particular ambassador or flag bearer. That individual has been chosen based upon his or her clinical acumen, operative expertise, research publications and oratory skill. This will become an annual event and each subspecialty ambassador will be awarded a medallion in honour of his or her contribution. It is to be hoped that this will become a prized possession, one which will be sought after by all subspecialty members.

The second session on Super Wednesday morning will be occupied by the visiting overseas orthopaedic Presidents. Collectively, they store decades of wisdom and experience in orthopaedic surgery of varying multicultural flavours.

The afternoon will then be left free for the Annual General Meeting. More time will be available for the meeting, unrestricted debate can be encouraged and a more collegiate atmosphere can be achieved.

#### *(c) The Plenary Sessions*

Special emphasis will be placed upon the plenary sessions each day. All Fellows attending the meeting will be encouraged to participate in these plenary sessions. Controversial topics such as

Generation Y, International Medical Graduates, The Corporatisation of Orthopaedic Surgical Practices and Continuing Professional Education will be addressed.

*(d) Industry Relationships*

I have also been determined to ensure that our Industry colleagues similarly gain maximum benefit from this four day scientific festival. Special lectures have been constructed for members of the Industry and will be provided by key personnel from our Fellowship. As the bonds between our two groups strengthen, so will we grow in a symbiotic fashion.

2. Continuing Orthopaedic Education Meetings

The last two or three years have witnessed a gradual decline in numbers of Fellows attending the COE meetings and associated difficulties in procuring speakers. Choosing relevant topics has also been a challenge given the dramatic swing towards subspecialisation in our Association.

The Board, along with the Scientific Committee, is currently investigating future options for Continuing Orthopaedic Education meetings. Any feedback from the Fellowship would be very greatly appreciated.

3. Research Opportunities

The Scientific Committee has a very strong association with the Australian Orthopaedic Association Research Foundation. Both Committees have a number of common members and considerable efforts are being expended both in fund raising and in promulgation of research funds to both clinical and basic scientific research projects within the Association.

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As our research base grows and strengthens, so does the professionalism of our Association improve. The basic foundations of training and education will be equal beneficiaries.

4. Future Activities

Whilst mammoth efforts are being expended by all involved in the production of the Annual Scientific Meeting in Hobart in October 2008, work has already started on the 2009 Scientific Meeting to be held in Cairns. Yet to be finalised, the theme will revolve around evidence based medicine, outcome analyses and the value of prognostic indicators. We can all remember advocates for different techniques or implants speaking eloquently and forcefully on the podium twenty years ago. I often wonder where those advocates are now and how well their championed products have performed. These are the issues which we will be exploring in 2009.

5. The Scientific Committee

I am indebted to the members of the Scientific Committee for their forthright and frank discussions, their objective viewpoints and their unlimited enthusiasm for the pursuit of excellence for our Association.

This is a particularly healthy Committee and it is an absolute privilege to be part of it. We all derive considerable pleasure in working on behalf of the Association.

DAVID MORGAN  
September, 2008