



## Newsletter - September 2007

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to Spring and the announcement of a couple of resignations from Council representatives! Council was saddened to receive Dr Liz Hallam's resignation (effective September 2007) from the *Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity subcommittee* of Council. Dr Hallam's last meeting will be held on 27 September 2007. Council commended Dr Hallam's invaluable contribution to its activities and the Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity subcommittee over her terms as a representative of the *Tasmanian Branch of the Paediatric Health Division of the RACP*. Council agreed that her invaluable expertise and commitment to a range of issues including child protection would be greatly missed. Council wishes Dr Hallam well in her future endeavours and welcomes her continued input into the future as convenient. Mr Nick Goddard also tendered his immediate resignation from Council as DHHS representative following his move to a new Executive position within the state's Mental Health Services. Council members wished to extend their sincere thanks to Mr Goddard's invaluable contribution to its activities during his term as DHHS representative and wished him well in his new position. New representatives will be sought as soon as possible. I am pleased to advise that plenty of discussion erupted and progress made at the last meeting of Council's held in August 2007 concerning the issues raised. Outcomes are reported in the Clinical Matters outlined below. At its last meeting it was also agreed to progress the Annual Report for 2005 first in order to complete by October 2007. The 2006 Annual Report will be progressed and completed as soon as possible following the release of 2006 data from the Clinical Data Services Unit in late 2007 early 2008. Relevant trends occurring in 2005 and subsequent recommendations proposed by the various Committees of Council (including the Paediatric, Perinatal and Maternal) will be reported in future newsletters to assist in highlighting important issues in a timely manner. Please note the link to the DHHS intranet site which provides access to the latest *RHH Clinical Practice guidelines and protocols*. This intranet link address is: <http://intra.dhhs.tas.gov.au/dhhs-online/page.php?id=16956>.

Dr Simon Parsons  
Chairperson  
Council of Obstetric & Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity

### COUNCIL NEWS

Current membership in accordance with the Terms of Reference includes Dr Simon Parsons (Chair); Professor Allan Carmichael; Dr James Brodribb; Dr Geoff Shannon; Ms Ros Escott; Dr Peter Dargaville; Mr Peter Askey-Doran, Associate Professor Bipin Gupta, & Mr Paul Mason (new Commissioner for Children). Following the recent resignation of Mr Nick Goddard from Council, a new DHHS representative will be sought as soon as possible.

The Council website continues to archive newsletters, Annual Reports and other relevant resource information. The website address is:



<http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/agency/partnerships/comm.php> Please note that *RHH Clinical Practice Guidelines and Protocols* can be accessed from the intranet link included in Council's website.

## CLINICAL MATTERS

- 1. Child Death Review Committee-** the Commissioner for Children, Mr Paul Mason, is continuing to refine the proposal for the establishment of this Committee (under the auspices of the Office for the Commissioner for Children) to expand the scope of review (by including **all** children) and possible centralisation of the review process with the support of the Office for the Commissioner for Children, Coroner's Office (change Coroner's Act to incorporate expertise of the medical profession) and the Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity Committee of the *Council of the Obstetric & Paediatric Mortality and Morbidity*. This Committee will primarily serve as a "check-point" for highlighting the effectiveness and current working status of the Child Protection system particularly in view of the consistent number of cases associated with Child Protection Services reported each year (note: approximately 5 paediatric death cases reported annually in Tasmania). Whether perinatal cases should be included within this Review system has been proposed. Sensitivity of this proposal is recognised and the matter will need further discussion by Council at its next meeting.
- 2. Male Circumcision in Tasmania-** the Commissioner for Children is to undertake a pioneering move to investigate possible prohibition of non-medically indicated male circumcision in Tasmania. Mr Mason to progress discussions with a consultation group regarding proposed prohibition of non-therapeutic male circumcision in Tasmania and will table his full report on the topic before the next meeting.
- 3. Tasmanian Road Safety Strategy 2007-2016-** In view of the recent considerable number of paediatric deaths occurring in Tasmania as a result of road trauma, Council agreed that the Strategy presented was positive and had satisfactorily addressed the concerns of Council particularly with regard to improving road design. For example, wire rope safety barriers have already been found to be erected along the Southern Outlet etc. TRSC has also informed of COPMM's recommendation to the Health Minister to overhaul annual vehicle registration to improve overall vehicle and road safety. An offer by members of the TRSC to present further details on this Strategy at the next meeting of Council has been accepted.
- 4. Establishment of Paediatric M&M Committees at the 3 teaching hospitals-** These Committees are continuing to be set up within each hospital where statutory immunity of relevant members on committees will be implemented. Council has recently written to the CEO's in the northern teaching hospitals to ascertain what stage has been reached in its establishment. Feedback has not yet been received regarding this issue. Once established, the Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity Committee will seek Annual Reports from respective Committees to assist in the review and classification of Paediatric Deaths within Tasmania.
- 5. Recommendation to change definition of Maternal Death—** the representative



of the Tasmanian Branch of the RANZCOG on Council, Dr Jamie Brodribb, has recommended that the current definition of maternal death in Tasmania be changed to include the words -"**within 42 days of delivery - irrespective of duration of pregnancy**" in order to comply with the National Perinatal Statistics Unit definition and WHO 1992.

Any changes to the current definition of maternal death (see below) will need to be discussed and ratified at the next meeting of Council to be held in November 2007.

**Maternal death:** means the death of a woman while pregnant, or within 42 days after the cessation of pregnancy-

- (a) from any cause related to, or aggravated by, the pregnancy or its management; and
- (b) Irrespective of the duration of the pregnancy and the location of the foetus within the woman's body.

**Late Maternal Death:** means the death of a woman more than 42 days but less than one year after the cessation of pregnancy-

- (a) resulting from an obstetric cause or another cause aggravated by an obstetric cause; and
- (b) Irrespective of the duration of the pregnancy and the location of the foetus within the woman's body.

## SUBCOMMITTEES

### PAEDIATRIC Mortality & Morbidity

Dr Liz Hallam has tendered her resignation from this subcommittee effective September 2007 with her last meeting to be held on 27 September 2007. Members of this subcommittee have acknowledged Dr Hallam's considerable and invaluable commitment to the review of paediatric deaths in Tasmania particularly with regard to SIDS cases. Dr Hallam's expertise and contribution to the future process of review of paediatric deaths in Tasmania will be greatly missed. This subcommittee continues to meet regularly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every second month (unless otherwise specified). Paediatric Death cases reported in 2005 and 2006 have been successfully reviewed and classified by the Committee.

### PERINATAL Mortality & Morbidity

Review and classification of perinatal deaths (including stillbirths and neonatal deaths) for 2005 is near completion and will be incorporated into the Annual Report 2005. Recommendations formulated in view of cases reviewed are currently being progressed.

### MATERNAL Mortality & Morbidity

No maternal deaths were reported in 2005 and this will be reflected in the 2005 Annual Report. The maternal death case reported in north-west Tasmania in 2006 which has already been reviewed by this committee and a summary and recommendations submitted will be included in the 2006 Annual Report.



## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Council has received a letter of support from the Health Minister for the appointment of new members Mr Paul Mason (Commissioner for Children in Tasmania) and Associate Professor Bipin Gupta (University of Tasmania representative) to Council for the conclusion of the current three-year term. The Health Minister is yet to seek approval from the Vice Chancellor of UTAS for Associate Professor Bipin Gupta's appointment as representative of the University of Tasmania on Council. A new DHHS representative will be sought following the recent resignation of Mr Nick Goddard from the Council.

## MEETINGS FOR 2007

### Next Council Meetings:

- Thursday 22 November, 12.30-2.00pm, DSU Meeting Room

### Next Paediatric Mortality & Morbidity Subcommittee Meetings:

- Thursday 27 September, 1.00-2.00pm, Forensic Pathology, Level 4, RHH
- Thursday 15 November, 1.00-2.00pm, Forensic Pathology, Level 4, RHH

**Note: All other subcommittee meetings will be advised.**

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