

Editorial

Cameras, lights , WONCA!

Ralph Wiles is Chair, RNZCGP

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP) has held annual meetings since its inception in 1974. These gatherings offer attendees the chance to see the College in action, meet and make friends and hear of medical developments in general practice.

The College meetings have always depended for their success on the willingness of delegates to actively participate in the scientific and social programmes. Fortunately, we have never been disappointed. But at no time has there been such an embarrassment of riches as this year, due in no small part to the fact the College has combined with the World Organisation of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians (World Organisation of Family Doctors, or WONCA) to hold this particular conference.

Conference planning

The organisation of a complex and significant medical conference is no small challenge, but playing host to delegates from throughout the Asia-Pacific region – and beyond – adds another layer of complexity to the task.

The decision-making process started three years ago with the formation of a steering committee. A proposal was submitted to the College Council that the conference be held in Christchurch in 2000, and that we apply to have WONCA status. Dates were set, a budget cast, the venue booked, a timetable formulated and a conference title created.

Keynote speakers were contacted, with the Committee having a good understanding of our Asia-Pacific obligations. The hard work of selling the conference then began. We have actively promoted it for the last two years, at meetings in San Francisco, Melbourne, Taiwan, Adelaide and Sydney. We also had promotional booths at the RNZCGP Annual Conference in Wellington and this year has seen an increase in advertising in the worldwide medical press.

It is exciting to see the ideas, hopes and wishes for the conference come to fruition. The Organising Committee has planned the conference to offer an excellent range of world-class keynote speakers, ably supported by quality, freestanding papers and workshops. (The response to the "Call for Papers" has been tremendous; forcing the Scientific Committee to relegate some excellent papers to a poster display.) There is also a varied and exciting social programme.

Registration has been very satisfactory, with delegates coming from more than 20 countries. The College hopes all attendees will leave fired with enthusiasm, having acquired some new knowledge or technique to continue their excellent work as

primary care doctors.

Acknowledgements

As is true for all complex organisations there is a lot of activity behind the scenes. I wish to thank the Organising Committee Chair, Dr Shirley Rawstron, and the committee members who have all worked very hard to make this a successful conference. The team from Conference Innovators has supported us ably, and we have had excellent support from our major sponsors, other contributing sponsors and all our exhibitors.

We have set the stage for all delegates to have a marvellous time at the 2000 RNZCGP WONCA Asia Pacific Regional meeting. We ask you to participate in all that we have on offer, enjoy every moment you are in Christchurch and take home new learning, new friendships and many happy memories.