

Inside this issue...

January 2011

Food for
Thought!

2010 State
conference
Wrap Up

December
Quarterly
Seminar Wrap

Local
Government
issues

Keeping
Up To Date



Message from the State President

'And a happy New Year to all.....'

Colleagues,

2010 has suddenly flown by and, upon reflection, it was yet another year where both the profession and environmental health practitioners were again challenged to think about events and issues often considered to be outside 'the norm'. Some of these issues included -

- Development of a mass vaccination plan for Tasmania,
- Introduction of smoke free public places,
- Role of EHOs in the draft national Clandestine Laboratory Site Remediation Guidelines,
- Auditing the performance of Level 1 activities,
- Development of Private Burial Guidelines,
- Role of EHOs in managing potable water quality & sewerage spills, and
- Third party auditing of food businesses.

The above list of activities indicates that the role of the EHO is forever changing and that our focus needs to keep changing in order to meet the challenges arising from within our local communities and occurring within the state and national public and environmental health legislative frameworks.

From the profession's point of view it is also worth noting that the University of Tasmania is now the sole deliverer within the state of an accredited course to become an environmental health officer. The first graduates from this course will have their bachelor degrees by July this year. This is the realisation of a dream that our profession has had for over 30 years!

So the scene is set for another year of professional and personal challenges, discussions, problem solving, decision-making and continuous improvement and Environmental Health Australia (Tas) is ready to play its part on your behalf.

The Board looks forward to your continued and ongoing support during 2011.

Mark Dwyer
State President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Dwyer', written over a white background.

Food For Thought!

Putrid Pizza Store Fined \$100,000

28 November 2010

A Dominos pizza store in Quakers Hill has been fined \$116,000 and its director fined \$13,500 for multiple breaches of the NSW Food Act. The Court found that the Dominos store and its director were guilty of sustained and ongoing disregard for the cleanliness, maintenance and control of pests in the premises. Costs of \$8,500 were also awarded.

Primary Industries Minister Steve Whan said, " This is a very significant fine and represents one of the worst examples of food safety and hygiene breaches that we've seen in this state."

Investigations were conducted following reports from customers of becoming ill after eating products from the outlet. Investigators uncovered appalling conditions in the store where floors were built up with food waste, dirt, grease and other decomposing matter and drains were found to be in a putrid state and blocked with rotting food. The Chief Scientist of the NSW Food Authority, Dr Lisa Szabo, stated that the extent of cockroach activity and the accumulation of food debris and grime in the store not only served as indicators of poor sanitary conditions but increased the risk of final product contamination by pathogenic microorganisms that increase the risk of foodborne illness.

Minister Whan said that despite numerous warnings, including improvement notices and a prohibition order the operators of the store failed to act to rectify the problems brought to their attention.

Full details of the prosecution have been placed on the NSW Food Authority's Name and Shame register.

TEN TRAITS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERS

- Be committed to success.
- Set proper priorities.
- Set and demand high standards.
- Be tough but fair in dealing with people.
- Concentrate on positives and possibilities.
- Develop and maintain a strong sense of urgency.
- Pay attention to detail.
- Provide for the possibility of failure.
- Be personally involved.
- Have fun.

"There is a palpable feeling of excitement that arises when you work with smart and engaged people whose goals and commitment are the same as yours."

Performance Without Compromise : How Emerson Consistently Achieves Winning Results
Charles F Knight & Davis Dyer, Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 2005.

2010 State Conference Wrap Up

The conference, held at the picturesque Aspect Tamar Valley Resort in Launceston, was another memorable milestone for EHA in providing a deserving event for all environmental health students and practitioners around the state. The conference theme— *'Environmental Health: Integration Not Isolation'* was most relevant and appropriate as we continue to forge partnerships with allied organisations in achieving common goals.

Generous sponsorship and support was provided by DHHS, SmartBurn and Deb Australia and a healthy attendance by delegates made for another great event.

Some of the presentations highlighted during the 3 day program included -

- Overview of relevant public health issues
- The year of Women in Local Government
- Introducing smoke free public places
- Water authorities working with councils
- Banning plastic bags
- Ocean oil spills
- Wood smoke and air quality
- Biochar as a sustainable energy resource
- Beaconsfield mine waste remediation technical tour
- 'Scores on doors' program in NSW
- EHO volunteering for overseas emergency situations
- Crisis management of people
- Conference dinner
- Annual General Meeting
- Quiz night
- Registration prize



Conference dinner—always a highlight of the annual conference.

Special thanks must go to Ellayne Wiles and Sarah Gillie for hosting an entertaining and amusing Quiz Night on the first night and who were appropriately dressed in punk and anarchy make-up and garb. Ellayne then repeated her hostess talents by entertaining the delegates during the conference dinner with another hilarious participation competition.

Congratulations to the conference organising committee for another job well done— Jacob, Ron, Carmel, Ellayne, Doug and Alex.

YOUR THOUGHTS PLEASE!

- What should the conference theme be for 2011?
- Where is your preferred location for the next conference?
- Any particular presenters, topics or activities preferred for the next conference?

Please send an email with your suggestions to any Board member . Thank you!

December Quarterly Seminar Wrap

The morning session was broadly devoted to Public Health Risk Activities and Carolyn Hay from TasCAHRD (Tasmanian Council on AIDS, Hepatitis and Related Diseases) kindly attended to provide an informative overview of these diseases, historical references, useful educational tools and background on TasCAHRD's role in the community.

A special thank you must go to Dwayne 'Doc' Davies from Tattoo Addition in Bridgewater who very kindly agreed to attend at very short notice. He spoke about both the art and responsibilities of tattooing, illegal operatives, what EHOs should look for when undertaking inspections and some industry standards.

After a fulfilling BBQ lunch in the sunshine the afternoon speaker from MPES was unfortunately unable to attend so Alex chaired a round table discussion with the attending delegates. The impromptu group discussion covered issues such as stormwater, Form 49 inspections, manhole covers in food preparation areas, grease arresters and grease traps and incident reporting by the various water authorities. There's always so much to discuss being an EHO isn't there?

FOR YOUR DIARY

QUARTERLY SEMINAR

WEDNESDAY 9 MARCH 2011

THE GRANGE

CAMPBELLTOWN

10AM FOR 10.30AM START

Please forward any suggestions for speakers or topics to any Board member—see page 6 for contact details.

Do You Watch.....

'The Enforcers'

WIN TV on Sunday evenings @ 6.30pm??

It's all about following regulators/enforcers on their daily duties and often features EHOs undertaking various and interesting tasks (food business inspections, unhealthy housing assessments, etc). Might be worth a watch—you might see someone you know!

Local Government Issues

Pandemic Over But Swine Flu Here To Stay

September 2010

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared that the “new H1N1 virus has largely run its course” but “this does not mean that the H1N1 virus has gone away.”

“Based on experience with past pandemics, we expect the H1N1 virus to take on the behaviour of a seasonal influenza virus and continue to circulate for some years to come,” the WHO briefing states. “In the post-pandemic period, localised outbreaks of different magnitude may show significant levels of H1N1 transmission. This is the situation we are observing right now in New Zealand, and may see elsewhere.”

The WHO reports that 20 to 40 per cent of people in some areas have been affected by the H1N1 virus, providing some immunity. While it describes the post-pandemic behaviour of the virus as “unpredictable”, it says many countries are reporting the appearance of H1N1 as part of a mix of seasonal influenzas rather than the dominant form.

Smoke Free Public Places—Momentum Grows

The Launceston City Council is the latest Tasmanian council to approve the introduction of smoking bans in its central business district, namely the Brisbane Street and Quadrant Malls as well as two major bus stops in St John Street. Tasmania Police has indicated that they would provide similar support to the Launceston City Council with enforcing the smoking bans as it presently does with the Hobart City Council. It is anticipated that the smoking bans would be introduced sometime in early in 2011.

This follows the Brisbane City Council’s earlier move to introduce smoking bans in its Queen Street and Albert Street Malls late last year. There is no safe level of smoking or passive smoking and, when put into perspective, it is not unreasonable for councils to introduce smoking bans into these type of high-use pedestrian areas that only occupy a miniscule portion of a city or town centre.

Clandestine Laboratory Site Remediation Guidelines

Last year all senior EHOs should have received formal notification from DHHS of this issue that had been previously identified by Start Heggie in his address to delegates at the Cradle Mountain state conference in 2008. The Australian Crime Commission has drafted these guidelines for national consideration and comment. It identifies EHOs as being the most suitable professional people in Local Government to be able to assist with the identification, assessment and remediation of potentially contaminated sites resulting from the operation of clandestine drug laboratories.

Specialist training would, of course, be necessary. It may be possible for specialist EHO resourcing to be considered on a statewide or regional basis due to the infrequent occurrence of these situations arising in Tasmania. An interesting challenge indeed!



www.eh.org.au

**ENVIRONMENTAL
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AUSTRALIA**

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Keeping up To Date

Movers & Shakers

- **Tracey Wright** has joined Hobart City Council on a casual basis.
- **Ellayne Wiles** has left Kingborough Council & moved to Newcastle City Council.
- **Natalie Rogers** is on maternity leave from Hobart City Council after giving birth to baby Ruby in December.
- **Jacci Viney** has left Break O Day Council and moved to Flinders Island Council.
- **Fiona Harriss** has joined Kingborough Council from NSW.
- **Alison Duniam** has joined Circular Head Council on a casual basis
- **Kristina Paul** has joined Huon Valley Council as an EHO

NEW BOARD MEMBER

The Board is pleased to announce that Jacci Viney has accepted an invitation to become a member of the Board following the departure of Ellayne Wiles. Jacci will provide a further injection of youth, vitality, passion and commitment to the Board and I'm sure you will all join with the current Board members in congratulating Jacci on her decision.

2011 EHA BOARD MEMBERS

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