19-25 October is OT Week!
Grab your poster inside
As I write the introductory words for the August edition I begin with a thank you.

**Membership renewals**

Thank you to you all for continuing your membership with Occupational Therapy Australia. For some of you we know this has been a change in the timing of renewals from a calendar year to a financial year. Many took up this change, with a significant number of renewals coming through well into the evening on the 30 June, ensuring you had that receipt for tax time! Many thanks; we appreciate this continued support. Your support enables us to support the work you see described in this and other editions of Connections.

**Lobbying and Representation by Occupational Therapy Australia**

As you will see from this edition, considerable lobbying and representation work is occurring in the states and nationally on a range of very important aspects for the profession. Reform pertaining to disability through the NDIS and in Aged Care, as well as the impact of the Federal Government’s budget decisions on the HWA and Medicare, all have implications for our profession nationally.

There are emerging developments too with regards to how occupational therapy scope of practice is being considered both nationally and locally in states and territories by government agencies, and this edition also describes some of the work and outcomes we are achieving and developing arising from lobbying in these areas.

**International developments: WFOT**

It seems like in June we experienced a mass evacuation of OTs from Australia to Japan. Every four years WFOT holds its World Congress, and many of our members attended. Lynnette Mackenzie provides a report from Japan on page 14, and Occupational Therapy Australia also celebrates and acknowledges some wonderful accolades for Australian OTs.

**OT Week 2014 theme and planning**

As you will see from the front cover of this edition and the poster included in the centre spread of this magazine, plans for OT Week 2014 are in full swing.

One of the aims of OT week is to increase awareness of the occupational therapy profession in the communities we serve. As your plans start to emerge, consider how you might be able to showcase the profession even in small
ways to your local community.
As government reforms continue to shape and impact upon the way our profession is funded and supported, and as a result of consumers exerting greater choice and control regarding how they select and receive services, we need to be finding ways locally to promote the profession so that we become front of mind for consumers.

**Career innovations – the Bionic eye**
Occupational Therapy Australia is always keen to learn of innovations in occupational therapy and in emerging OT career paths. As funding for positions in the more traditional occupational therapy areas becomes more challenging, it is great to learn of new opportunities.

Well, for those of us who had our teenage years in the late-70s to early-80s, we may recall fondly the American TV show “The Six Million Dollar man”. This edition includes a story on occupational therapy and the bionic eye.

On pages 20-21, Shane McSweeney shares his journey applying the practice of occupational therapy in medical technology and clinical research.

We encourage more members to share their journeys and innovative roles like Shane. This helps the profession see possibility and truly celebrate “our potential”.

**“Changing of the guard” in the SA Division**
It was the end of an era on 18 July. After nine years as Executive Director of the SA Division, Brian Whitford left Occupational Therapy Australia having announced his retirement a few months ago. A farewell was held on 4 July with many of his long term colleagues (see photo at right).

We have been very fortunate though to be able to find someone equally as able to take on this leadership role. We are delighted to announce that Jennifer Coulls has commenced as SA Divisional Manager.

Jen comes to the role with extensive senior management and consulting experience in both the non-profit and corporate sectors.

She holds a Master of Business (Management) and Graduate Certificate in Management, and is currently studying a Graduate Certificate in Public Policy. She has held roles such as Executive Officer of the Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists (ASCEPT); Senior Policy officer for the Australian Technology Network; Strategic Planner, Office of Deputy Vice Chancellor and President (Academic), and Business Manager roles for the University of Adelaide.

In 2010, Jen established Tincat Consulting, a management consultancy delivering business services to the education, non-profit and government sectors. Her services include policy review and analysis, executive support to Boards, project management, association management, and change management.

She will bring a significant suite of skills, knowledge and experience to the SA Division building on the solid foundations of past years.

**Congratulations to Board Director Peter Bothams**
OTA Vice President, Peter Bothams, has recently successfully been recognised as a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors having successfully completed the Company Directors course. This knowledge will bring another dimension to the great skill set we have on our Board. Well done Peter.

Below: Outgoing SA Executive Director Brian Whitford at his retirement farewell on 4 July. Brian had been part of the OTA family for nine years and will be missed.
National CPD survey
Thank you to all who completed the CPD Survey. The results are being collated and we will provide results once they are available. CPD is as important to us as it is to you, and we value your feedback.

State Conferences
August will see the spotlight shift to Darwin for the Northern Territory Division Conference, with the theme TechnOT: Improving Outcomes through Technology and Innovation.

Then in October, our South Australia and Queensland Divisions will be adding to the mix:
Making Meaning of the Past: Forging the Future, South Australia, 23-24th October

Engage Inspire Advance, Queensland, 23-25th October.

Do consider enhancing your professional development through attendance at one (or more) of these!

Upcoming events
Occupational Therapy Australia is running a three-part marketing webinar series entitled Creative Marketing in Occupational Therapy: How to Get Yourself and Your Practice Noticed. Starting on 4 August and continuing for two additional weeks, these one-hour sessions will provide occupational therapists with marketing ideas and strategies.

Places are filling fast for Establishing and Developing an Occupational Therapy Private Practice (starting 27 September) and Stroke Recovery Online (starting 6 October).

All of the above events have proven very popular, so avoid disappointment and register now.

Reciprocal Member Agreements
Occupational Therapy Australia has reciprocal member agreements with the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) and the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Australia (HFESA). Occupational Therapy Australia members can receive member rates at selected workshops/events with the APA and for all events with HFESA.

For a current listing of eligible events, please visit the “Other CPD” section of the website:

www.otaus.com.au
(navigate to PD > Other CPD Opportunities > Reciprocal Member Opportunities)

For up-to-date information regarding Occupational Therapy Australia events, please see the website:


Do you have feedback or queries about our CPD offerings?
To find out more, please visit www.otaus.com.au or email any suggestions to nationalcpd@otaus.com.au.

A member’s experience
Members of Occupational Therapy Australia can also receive member rates with the Australian Institute of Management (AIM). Recently a member from Queensland attended an AIM event and was kind enough to send through a testimonial:

Australian Institute of Management:
Young Manager Program (3 day workshop)

Don’t let the title deceive you, this course is for every age group and every emerging leader.

Time management, procrastination, delegations and vital conversations were just a few topics that had our group interacting, brainstorming and role playing. With lots of discussion, use of tools such as surface laptops, and an amazing lunch, our experienced facilitator led us into the world of coaching, managing up, down, and across, and managing our careers.

A quick stop into the facility library turned into walking out with three books! I highly recommend a wander.

After attending the course it was like a light bulb went on. I needed to be able to manage myself before I could manage others. I now have a greater knowledge and confidence in myself, which recently enabled me to apply for a senior position. I also feel this course has also helped my own clinical work as an OT.
Occupational Therapy Australia
26th National Conference & Exhibition

Changes
Challenges
Choices

1-3 July, 2015
Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre

Put the dates in your diary now and stay tuned!

2014 Trauma Education
with clinical psychologist
Dr Leah Giarratano

Intended for all mental health professionals
Each event attracts 14 CPD Hours

Treating PTSD
This two-day (9am-5pm) program presents a highly practical and interactive workshop (case-based) for treating traumatised clients; the content is applicable to both adult and adolescent populations. The techniques are cognitive behavioural, evidence-based, and will be immediately useful and effective for your clinical practice. The emphasis is upon imparting practical skills and up-to-date research in this area.

Treating Complex Trauma
This advanced two-day (9am-5pm) program focuses upon treatment for adult survivors of child abuse and neglect. Participants must have completed the ‘Treating PTSD’ program. The workshop completes Leah’s four-day basic training for professionals working with traumatised clients; the content is applicable to both adult and adolescent populations. The program incorporates practical techniques from ACT, CBT, DBT, EFT, Metacognitive Therapy and Schema Therapy.

Reduced Fee for OTA members is $600 for each event SAVING $120 (price includes GST). Non OTA members pay $720 for each event.

Both events are offered nationally. A program flyer and registration form with reduced OTA pricing is available on the OTA website in ‘Other CPD Opportunities’.

Further information about both events and locations is available at www.talominbooks.com

Please direct enquiries to Joshua George on (02) 9823 3374 or mail@talominbooks.com
It's been another busy period of lobbying and advocacy. We have continued to implement our newly developed member driven, community focused lobbying and advocacy framework across a number of significant policy areas.

**Health Workforce Australia – Senate Enquiry**

As part of the Government’s 2014-15 Budget measures, the government announced it would:

> achieve savings of $142.0 million over five years by abolishing Health Workforce Australia and consolidating its functions into the Department of Health.

This announcement could have a significant impact on occupational therapists and the Association. Occupational Therapy Australia has involvement with a number of existing Health Workforce Australia (HWA) projects including:

- Future Health Leaders Council
- HWA Standing Advisory Committee for Health Professions
- The Rural and Remote Specialist Generalist
- Health Workforce 2025: specifically, the Health Workforce Australia 2014 Report on Occupational Therapy.

The government’s proposed changes mean these projects have, as yet, an uncertain future until they are reviewed by the Commonwealth Health Department.

The Senate referred these proposed changes to the HWA to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee. It has held an enquiry into the impact such changes would have on the health workforce and broader community.

Occupational Therapy Australia submitted to this enquiry and recommended the following:

- The Department of Health retain the body of knowledge HWA has developed since its inception
- The Department of Health follow HWA’s successful cross-sectoral community engagement in its enquiries and policy development processes
- The Department of Health pursue practical and relevant policy developments that focus on the community
- The Department of Health establish a focused and specialized Workforce Development Unit that can, like HWA respond quickly and efficiently to policy needs.

Many thanks to all those members who participated and provided us with feedback for our submission. Occupational Therapy Australia’s submission is available under the latest News section of the website.

Our submission was well received by the committee and Occupational Therapy Australia was invited to appear before the Senate hearing. However due to short lead-in time for the hearing date (one week!) we were not in a position to reschedule, prepare as needed and attend.

**Out of Pocket Expenses – Senate Enquiry**

In the previous edition of *Connections*, we updated members on our submission to the Senate’s enquiry into Out-of-Pocket Health Expenses. This submission was also well received by the Senate committee, which received over 200 submissions. As a result, Occupational Therapy Australia was one of 16 organisations invited to appear before the Senate to testify at this hearing.

The Out-Of-Pocket Senate hearing is being held at the end of July. Occupational Therapy Australia will be appearing, and our Opening Statement will be published in the next edition of *Connections*.

**Commonwealth Home Support Package**

In late June the Federal Government released its Key Directions for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme Discussion Paper.

Aged care is a significant area of policy and representation for Occupational Therapy Australia. The Association has representatives advising on a number of high-level aged care committees, including:

- National Aged Care Alliance (NACA)
- DSS Gateway Consultation Group
- DSS Gateway Assessment tool development
- DSS and NACA Specified Services Review Committee
- DSS and NACA Subgroup 5 Committee (home modifications and equipment).

As such, Occupational Therapy Australia is in a great position to provide feedback on the key directions paper. Joy Pennock and Jan Erven led a thorough consultation process, which enabled the Association to submit substantial feedback to the review. Our submission covered many of the 13 review areas of focus.

Many thanks again to all those who participated and provided us with feedback for our submission. Occupational Therapy Australia’s submission is available under the Latest News section of the website.

**NDIS**

There continue to be many developments in the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

In June we held more meetings with Barbara Perry, the Shadow Minister for Disability in NSW, as well as some key advisors. A number of matters are being pursued around the NSW government’s plan to withdraw the NSW government from delivering state disability services by 2018.

We have also held further discussions with the NSW Department of Family and Community Services about the specific workforce transition issues for staff currently working within the department.
As many of these NDIS developments are state-specific, Occupational Therapy Australia is establishing a Divisional NDIS Reference Groups structure. At this stage it’s planned that the Divisional reference groups will each have a representative on a National NDIS Advisory Group that will meet bi-monthly so we can maintain an informed national lobbying agenda around the NDIS. Please contact your Division if you’d like to be involved in these reference groups.

Finally, Occupational Therapy Australia has been invited to attend Dr Bruce Bonyhady’s address to the National Press Club “Building the NDIS – A progress report”. This will be a good opportunity to hear about the broader direction the Federal Government is taking with the NDIS, as well as to also meet with key stakeholders in the sector.

While in Canberra for this address, Occupational Therapy Australia representatives will also attend meetings in Parliament House with the NDIS Advisor to the Minister for Social services as well as the Assistant Minister for Health.

**AHPA NDIS Reference Group**

Member organisations with allied health professionals working in the disability field have formed an AHPA-NDIS Reference Group. The group is meeting each fortnight, and AHPA has funded a Project Officer position to provide the group with some resources to achieve their objectives. This part-time position is shared by Natasha Layton (OT) and Cathy Olsen (SP). The group is also working closely with Lynne Adamson (Director, Research Market, Innovation, Quality and Pricing, NDIA). The Co-convenors of the AHPA-NDIS Reference Group, Rachel Norris (OTA), Gail Mulcair (SPA) and Lin Oke will be meeting with the CEO of NDIS in the next few weeks.

In recent weeks the AHPA NDIS group has been building connections with a number of organisations and groups to further work and influence in the development of the NDIS.

One of these is the work of the NDS (the National Disability Service), which won the Commonwealth tender to develop the national disability workforce strategy. Following discussions with the launch transition sites, a number of workforce matters were raised and these formed the basis of a preliminary report identifying key issues for the National Disability Workforce Strategy. This resulted in seven projects being developed. Of particular interest for us is the “Analysis of allied health education and training”. This investigation is considering the preparedness of undergraduates to work in the NDIS and challenges and strategies to attract them into this area of work.

AHPA have also been included in representation at the NDS Working Party looking at Support Workers in the NDIS Workforce Strategy.
AHPA communique:  
Advocating for the role and value of allied health professionals

2014 was expected to be a busy year for AHPA with a new government to work with, and several reports from the National Commission of Audit pending. It has indeed proven to be so, and there has been a buzz of activity in AHPA related to Government advocacy and relations, and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

**Government advocacy and relations**

Following the completion of the National Commission of Audit and the delivery of the 2014 Budget, AHPA has developed key position papers in consultation with our members. Whilst individual organisations make their own connections with government and opposition representatives, it is important that the core allied health messages are delivered by a united voice across many allied health professions. These messages were effectively delivered recently when a contingent of AHPA member organisations attended a day of meetings in Canberra. Eight meetings were attended across the day, including various Senators and Ministers, and the Chief Allied Health Officer and Adviser.

AHPA’s position papers included:

- Retaining best practice is crucial to the success of the NDIS
- Important access to update electronic health records
- Prescribing rights for allied health professionals
- Ensuring quality care in the new Primary Health Networks
- Preventative health and health workforce measures: retaining important data, knowledge and networks
- Streamlining direct referrals to medical specialists
- Improving mental health outcomes through allied health.

They can be accessed via AHPAonline. Go to: www.ahpa.com.au then > AHPA Position Statements

**Board and Management meetings**

AHPA’s Board and Management meetings are always well attended, spanning some four hours each month. The meetings not only concern the mandatory Governance issues relating to the organisation, but predominantly focus on the sharing of views and experiences amongst the various allied health professions, and developing strategies to address common issues. The meetings can also be an opportunity to engage with an invited speaker. This allows the speaker to hear perspectives from a range of professions. In recent months we welcomed invited guest Kath Philip (Chief Allied Health Adviser of Victoria), Teri Snowdon (Head, Clinical Governance, NEHTA), Gab Gossage (National Health Services Directory) and Donna Murray (CEO of Indigenous Allied Health Australia).

The Management Committee have also shared in a workshop presented by Mary Morel “Write to govern: make an impact with the written word”. A valuable collaboration between most of AHPA’s member organisations and affiliates was sharing in the development of the Privacy Kit for allied health professionals.

**Submissions and representation**

Since our last Communique, apart from the various NDIS submissions, AHPA has arranged for representation on IHPA’s Mental Health Costing Study (Steering Committee) and the Australian Telehealth Conference Strategic Advisory Committee. Representatives have also attended the Victorian Allied Health Research Conference and the National Forum on inter-professional Education.

Submissions were made to the IHPA’s Mental Health Costing Study.

**Lin Oke**  
Executive Officer, AHPA  
office@ahpa.com.au

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www.canterburyconcepts.com.au
OT Week 2014 is coming!

Reach your POTential

Plans to promote OT Week 2014 are well and truly afoot!

Consumer focus

Occupational Therapy Australia’s national marketing and communications committee has developed a promotional plan for this year’s OT Week, with the primary objective of raising the profile of the profession within the community.

With this in mind, all nationally-coordinated promotion of OT Week 2014 will be aimed at educating consumers on the different ways that occupational therapy can help in day-to-day life.

One of the communication challenges in promoting occupational therapy is the sheer number and variety of areas of OT practice; the profession is relevant to consumers from all walks of life, at all life stages, who are encountering widely varied life challenges. This message has been succinctly captured in the messaging and branding developed for OT Week 2014.

Going big: mass media

Digital advertising is a very cost-effective way of reaching a broad cross-section of consumers, and a digital ad campaign that uses this year’s OT Week messaging and branding will be rolled out during the month of October. So if you’re online visiting one of the Fairfax networks’ many websites, don’t be surprised if you see a Reach your POTential ad appear before your eyes!

Going local: promoting OT Week in your community

State Division activities

Each State Division will be organising their own local initiatives to celebrate OT Week. Stay tuned to your Divisions’ news bulletins for details on what’s planned for your area.

Put up your OT Week poster now!

Your OT Week poster is included in this edition of Connections. Why not display it now in your community to help pave the way for OT Week? Some ideas for places to display it include your workplace, a community noticeboard, or a local health service centre. And the more foot-traffic the location receives, the better.

Promotional merchandise

A full range of OT Week promotional merchandise will be available to purchase from the website. Be sure to log in to receive your member discount! Visit www.otaus.com.au.

OT Week 2014 is coming!
19-25 October is OT Week!
Put up your poster and write the dates in your diary now! #OTWeek2014

ACCEPTANCE & COMMITMENT THERAPY FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

PRESENTED BY NESH NIKOLIC

Nesh Nikolic is a Clinical Psychologist and ACT trainer with over 10,000 hours of one-on-one therapy experience.

Nesh has practiced ACT within a number of therapeutic contexts including individual therapy, couples counselling and family therapy. He has also worked with the Canberra Raiders and other athletes on increasing sporting performance using ACT.

Nesh runs a busy private psychology practice and has applied ACT to a wide range of mental health difficulties including depression, anxiety, trauma, personality disorders, eating disorders and pain management.

Find out more and register at actskills.com/training or call 02 6262 6157
Scope of practice in occupational therapy

As discussed in previous editions of Connections, the practice of occupational therapy (as well as other allied health professions) is currently being examined by a range of external stakeholders:

1. Victoria’s Grattan Institute proposed that up to 30% of the work of occupational therapists and physiotherapists in public hospitals could be performed by allied health assistants (report: Unlocking skills in hospitals: better jobs, more care)
2. Health Workforce Australia have run a number of pilots addressing health professional prescribing pathways and rural and remote health workforce reform

Recommendations of the above works included the following:

• That allied health professionals are educated to competently undertake a greater range of tasks and responsibilities than are often used
• That opportunities exist to extend the scope of practice of some allied health professionals in line with reforms in other Australian states and internationally to improve patient satisfaction, clinical outcomes and reduce waiting times
• That the support workforce can be used more effectively to enable allied health professionals to work to their full scope of practice
• That many of the current hours of operation do not align with the needs of patients and a number of barriers exist to realising the full capacity of this workforce.

Barriers to implementing full scope roles and tasks have been described in many of these reports and include historical culture, custom and practice, funding models, education accreditation standards and organisational policies.

Given a heightened focus on these matters by governments and their agencies, it is important that Occupational Therapy Australia continues to work on influencing and shaping our responses to these matters. To date, work by the Association has focused on four areas:

1. Intra-professional

A key step is to critically analyse our own perspectives regarding occupational therapy. This enables us to identify whether we are indeed following ‘historical culture, custom and practice’ as a profession, or performing and developing according to our underpinning core principles and evidence base. Work is underway to describe core scope, balancing an appreciation of continually developing scope of individuals; the core occupational nature of occupational practice across a diversity of practice areas; and dynamic and developing work roles. From this work, the nature of advanced and extended (or expanded) scope is becoming clearer, across a range of practice areas and are being explored by Occupational Therapy Australia’s National Professional Practice and Standards Committee.

2. Competence/scope

Occupational Therapy Australia hears and responds to member experiences and concerns around practice recognition, availability of supervision and mentoring, training and development opportunities, and graduate preparedness for the workforce. Meetings occur with key tertiary sector bodies (for example ANZCOTE), and submissions have been provided to Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector bodies through the Community Health and Industry Skills Council. Submissions, for example, have included commentary on the appropriateness of the competencies underpinning the training for allied health assistants.

“Given a heightened focus on these matters by governments and their agencies, it is important that Occupational Therapy Australia continues to work on influencing and shaping our responses”
3. Inter-professional
Strong links exist with our allied health colleagues through forums such as the Allied Health Professionals Association (AHPA), which enables dialogue about new models of transdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary teamwork such as those being proposed in the NDIS reforms.

The Occupational Therapy Australia Professional Representation portfolio co-ordinates communication from many Occupational Therapy Australia members on a range of cross-professional committees and groups, profiling what occupational therapy has to offer, and gathering data on current developments.

4. Workforce
Both the Queensland and Victorian Divisions have focused on workforce issues being faced by the profession.

The Victorian Division Workforce and Professional Issues Committee alongside the OTs in Leadership & Management Group in Victoria produce and regularly update an occupational therapy job classifications and roles document. This guides both managers and occupational therapists regarding the expectations of OTs working at different levels within the Vic health system.

The Queensland Work Special Interest Group are examining ways to differentiate and acknowledge the different levels of expertise and experience in the various areas of practice and have identified the need to develop an advanced scope of practice framework for the profession. The work of these committees is being shared to develop national perspectives on these issues.

Occupational Therapy Australia members can feel confident that their professional association is examining and responding to current and future tensions and opportunities, working to ensure the full potential of occupational therapists is realised, both for individual practitioners, and for the profession.

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- have fun
- take care of myself
occupational therapy

Reach your potential

To find an occupational therapist in your community, visit www.otaus.com.au.
WFOT update

WFOT Congress update: post-Japan news

By now I expect several members will have returned home after a very exciting and stimulating time at the WFOT Congress in Yokohama in June. The Congress saw over 6,000 delegates from over 66 countries and 20 concurrent sessions on most days, which made it a very large gathering of OTs and a big challenge to get around to everything that was of interest.

The Japanese Occupational Therapy Association and WFOT were honoured by the attendance of the Emperor and Empress of Japan at the Opening Ceremony. Several of the WFOT Council and Executive were also able to attend a reception to meet the Emperor and Empress after the opening ceremony. While abstracts were not available as part of the registration process they are now available online at:

http://wfot2014.mas-sys.com/

and are searchable. People who did not go to the congress can also explore this resource.

Lee Zakrezewski (Delegate), myself (First Alternate Delegate), and Thelma Burnett (Vice President of the Asia Pacific Occupational Therapy Regional Group) also attended the WFOT Council Meeting for the week prior to the congress that was held in Chiba, Japan. It was my first Council Meeting and was a great experience to get to know and work with so many occupational therapy leaders from around the world. There was a 200 page agenda to get through in a week, which was fairly intense.

Some changes in the executive format of WFOT have occurred since the Council Meeting. There are now different programs areas that consist of Executive members and Council members. These are:

- Education: Led by Lyle Duque from the Philippines
- Practice Development: Led by Sandra Bressler from Canada
- Research: Led by Susan Coppola from the USA
- Standards and Quality: Led by Athena Yi-Jung Tsai from Taiwan.

Lee is participating in the Practice Development group and Lynette is in the Research Project group. Over the next two years before the next Council meeting each project area will have sub-groups working on projects of international interest for occupational therapy development.

The Executive has also had some changes with the retirement of Sharon Britnell as President. Marilyn Pattison is now President, with Sue Baptiste (Canada) continuing as Vice-President, Samantha Shann (UK) continuing as vice President Finance, and Ritchard Ledgerd (UK) is now the Executive Director.

Lynette Mackenzie
New WFOT President elected

Occupational Therapy Australia was delighted to see Australian OT and long term member Marilyn Pattison elected the role as WFOT President.

Many would know of Marilyn’s long term passion and dedication to the work of WFOT most recently in her role as Executive Director. Congratulations Marilyn from us all at Occupational Therapy Australia.

OTA-WFOT Program Approval Committee update

In previous communications members will have noted that the processes for Occupational Therapy University Program Accreditation and for determining whether a program has met the WFOT Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists have separated; these are now two distinctively different processes, facilitated by two organisations: Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA) and the Occupational Therapy Council (OTC).

In the new system, the OTC is now responsible for Occupational Therapy Program Accreditation, and OTA remains responsible for determining whether an occupational therapy program has met the WFOT education minimum standards guidelines.

As a consequence of this change, Universities are now being advised separately regarding program accreditation status, from the OTC, and their approval for meeting the WFOT minimum education standards, from OTA.

In early 2014 Occupational Therapy Australia convened its new “OTA-WFOT Program Approval Committee”, comprising: Carol McKinstry (Chairperson), Ev Innes, Jan Yarrington, Lee Zakrzewski, Mandy Stanley, Kim Mestroni (Secretariat) for Helen Hendy (maternity leave).

This committee has been developing a new process for OTA to evaluate a program’s compliance with the WFOT minimum education standards separate to the accreditation process. Universities will be advised directly of the details of the OTA process for WFOT Program Approval in the coming months.

In the interim, please direct any enquiries to Kim Mestroni (memberserv.vic@otaus.com.au).

Would you like to contribute content to Connections?

Connections welcomes submissions that are of interest to Association members.

Deadlines for each issue and details on how to make submissions are published on the front inside cover of each edition.

We look forward to receiving your submissions!
## CPD calendar

The 30 November annual CPD hours deadline is rapidly approaching!

All registered occupational therapists must accrue 30 CPD hours by Sunday 30 November, 2014 as a condition of registration.

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<th>SEPT 27</th>
<th>Establishing and Developing an OT Private Practice (this is a 3 part series)</th>
<th>WEBINAR</th>
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<td>OCT 3</td>
<td>Work Breakfast – Legal Update</td>
<td>Brisbane, QLD</td>
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<td>Online Stroke Recovery Event October 2014</td>
<td>ONLINE</td>
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<td>OCT 7</td>
<td>Education Xtra – Duty of Care and Equipment Prescription</td>
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<td>Chronic Injuries in the Mining Industry</td>
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<td>Cultural Responsiveness in Everyday Practice</td>
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<td>OCT 28</td>
<td>Electrical Stimulation in Neurological Rehabilitation (Upper Limb Workshop) – Functional Training Session</td>
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<td>OCT 29</td>
<td>Respiratory Injuries in the Mining Industry</td>
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<td>Sensory Interventions for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (video conference)</td>
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<td>E-portfolios for Occupational Therapy</td>
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<td>Education Xtra – Maintaining Wellbeing: A Guide for OTs to Maintain Their Own Wellbeing and How to Assist Their Clients (video conference)</td>
<td>Adelaide, SA</td>
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<td>DEC 5</td>
<td>Introducing a Coach Approach for OTs – Creating and Managing Change</td>
<td>Brisbane, QLD</td>
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### October-December, 2014


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<td>Being Sensational – Evaluating, Collaborating and Celebrating Sensory Processing Differences</td>
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<td>11-13</td>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder – Evaluating, Collaborating, Celebrating, Teaming Around the Child, Coaching Families and Intervention</td>
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<td>29-31</td>
<td>Introduction to Medico-legal Field of Practice (1 day)</td>
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<td>Paradigms, Elephants &amp; Primary Care</td>
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<td>Environmental Home Modifications – The Basics</td>
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<td>Addressing the Forgotten ADL: Sexual Activity</td>
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<td>My Name is Trauma: Enabling Occupational Resilience Through Play</td>
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(Some event details may changes closer to the date. Visit [www.otaus.com.au/professionaldevelopment](http://www.otaus.com.au/professionaldevelopment) for the most up-to-date information.)
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

FRIDAY 24 OCTOBER
Jonathan “Jon Jon” Rivero
Create your Awesome!
International Presenter, Canada

Occupational Therapist, author, 4th Dan black belt champion, musician and filmmaker, Jonathan is the Founder and CEO of Qi Creative Inc. Jonathan has integrated his creative talents and passions to inspire children, adolescents, families and schools living with special needs by celebrating their talents and strengths to overcome challenges. Jon Jon has been featured on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. As an artist, he has collaborated with thousands of youth activists and leaders from various countries to use their strengths and talents to promote peace, creativity and unity in their respective local communities.

SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER
Associate Professor Lynne Adamson
Engaging the future: Change inspired by the National Disability Insurance Scheme

Lynne is the Director of Research with the National Disability Insurance Agency, seconded from her role with Deakin University where she is Associate Professor of Occupational Science and Therapy. Lynne has more than 30 years experience in a range of practice and management. Lynne’s research includes her PhD study of the historical development of occupational therapy practice knowledge in mental health, evaluation of mental health services, teaching and learning in occupational therapy and recently, NDIS activities. Her goal is to inspire occupational therapists to take on future challenges for the profession; this goal has stirred her interest in the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS: THURSDAY 23 OCTOBER
Jonathan Rivero & Paula Rivero
My Name is Trauma: Enabling Occupational Resilience Through Play

An interactive workshop, covering: Knowledge and theory of trauma; What do traumatised children need; Creative interventions for traumatised children; Taking care the helper: The value of self care. Participants will leave this workshop with an understanding of trauma, the psychological and physiological impacts and the behaviours and reactions related to trauma.

Angela McNamee & Kathryn Frame
Intro to the Medico legal Field of Practice

This workshop will help you navigate what is a broad and challenging field of practice. Presented by Occupational Therapists, with a leading personal injury lawyer, Sarah Atkinson also providing information on expectations of OTs in the medico legal arena. Participants will be provided with an introduction to the legal system and the various parties and processes; Who is considered an ‘expert witness and what is required of an ‘expert witness’; What to include when performing an assessment and completing a report for medico legal purposes; What is expected when you are called to give evidence; What is expected of the lawyer/expert witness relationship and of occupational therapists in this relationship.
An occupational therapy student has won a scholarship for allied health students from regional and remote areas.

Tasmin Lewis, from Drouin East in Victoria, is one of four winners of the Give Them Wings scholarships awarded to allied health students from rural communities by Rural Health Workforce Australia and the Royal Flying Doctors Service.

The scholarships, which are worth $2,500 each, aim to encourage future health professionals from rural and remote areas to consider returning to live and work in country areas. It is hoped that this will help provide much-needed health care services to people in rural communities.

Each scholarship comprises a Royal Flying Doctor experience as well as cash payments to help recipients cover the costs of first year university.

Rural Health Workforce Australia and the Royal Flying Doctor Service offer the scholarships specifically to students from rural areas as this group is more likely to return to work in rural communities once they have completed their studies.

For more details on the Give Them Wings scholarships, visit: www.rwha.org.au

Meet Tasmin Lewis

Where are you studying occupational therapy?
I’m in my first year at Monash University’s Peninsula campus. I’m a member of the WILDFIRE Rural Health Club there too.

What first sparked your interest in occupational therapy?
I’d worked in aged care and knew that I wanted to work with people who have disabilities. There was a kindergarten for children with disabilities in my area that used a multi-disciplinary approach – they had teachers, physios, and OTs on staff – so I thought that’d be a good place to do some work experience and learn more about each of those career paths.

While I was on placement there, I watched an OT help a boy with a disability learn to take off screw-caps by using a bubble-blower bottle, knowing that he loved blowing bubbles. It was pure genius, and I was hooked after that!

What path do you hope to take with your career as an OT?
It’s early days, so I’m not sure yet about what specific area of practice I’d like to work in. But I know for sure that I do want to return to a rural community to work. I think if I can become a good OT, then I can be of service to rural Australia.
Developing Bionic Eyes with the help of occupational therapy
Shane McSweeney | Occupational Therapist | Centre for Eye Research Australia, Melbourne

Australia is well known for its expertise and excellence in the area of medical bionic research, including development of the cochlear implant and the pacemaker. For the last five years Bionic Vision Australia (BVA) has been at the forefront in the area of retinal prostheses, or “bionic eyes”. A retinal prosthesis will help people who have lost their sight from retinal degenerative diseases such as retinitis pigmentosa and age-related macular degeneration.

The work of BVA and its consortium members (Centre for Eye Research Australia, Bionics Institute, The University of Melbourne, The University of New South Wales and NICTA) has resulted in a prototype clinical trial of Australia’s first bionic eye, where three patients have been implanted with the device for the past two years. This study has helped us determine the feasibility of the device as well as the best surgical approach. It has also provided information on how patients can interpret simulated vision accurately.

“For OTs considering the next move in their careers, medical technology and clinical research may be a field to consider.”

As can be seen in Figure 1, the current prototype technology has an external camera (situated on a pair of glasses) which sends a signal to electrodes that are implanted behind the retina in the eye. The electrodes help to fulfil the action of the damaged parts of the retina, stimulating the visual pathway using electrical current rather than normal visual input.

The project has sourced an array of professional expertise to help create not only an effective device, but also novel methods of testing patients with bionic vision to show how they can use the device in their daily lives. For example, live visual feedback is monitored by the team engineer using a tablet computer. This allows the engineer to choose which vision processing algorithm best represents the item they are seeing, enabling the patients to accurately reach for items like that in Figure 3.

Subsequently, the occupational therapist’s (OT) role is involved in numerous stages of the development; from product design, to the development of very low vision assessments, visual training, and rehabilitation. In Figure 3, the patient is asked to identify and pick up a high contrast object on a table. This is made possible by the correct selection of a vision processing algorithm (as shown in

The November deadline for CPD point accrual is rapidly approaching.
Are you on top of your 2014 CPD yet?

Occupational therapists must accrue 30 hours of CPD each year by November 30 as an AHPRA registration requirement.

Occupational Therapy Australia offers a comprehensive selection of CPD events in each state throughout the year.

So get on top of your 2014 requirements today!

Check the centre spread CPD calendar, or visit the CPD calendar online:


Your partner in professional excellence
Figure 2). This incorporates modified low vision occupational therapy tasks with ground-breaking bionic eye technology.

The next proposed clinical trial from BVA would enable the participants to have a “take home” unit, which they could use in their home or work environment and which would provide even more opportunity for the use of occupational therapy protocols and concepts.

For OTs considering the next move in their careers, medical technology and clinical research may be a field to consider. This project has taken me on a journey of new experiences: transferring community-knowledge into research design; implementing patient trials and ethics; liaising with multidisciplinary research partners Australia-wide and allowing me to further explore and learn about my interest area (vision loss). This is on top of the way a person living with very low vision can continue to seek independence in this highly visual world.

At the present time, Australia’s Bionic Eye project is funded until the end of 2014 and we hope that new funding will be secured to allow the work to continue. It is likely that the field of visual prostheses, alongside new therapies such as stem cells and gene therapy, will provide people with ultra-low vision with new opportunities to regain increasing levels of functional vision in the future. Occupational therapy is sure to play a pivotal role in this future.

shane.mcsweeney@unimelb.edu.au

As an OT professional, the daily learning of both the patient and the research team plays a significant part in understanding this new simulated vision. We have made large advances in our knowledge of how a person interprets bionic vision; how bionic vision may be useful in the future and how neural plasticity contributes to the outcomes of such vision restoration techniques. This has been a highlight of my role and it is amazing to be on the forefront of such cutting-edge technology.
2014 Occupational Therapy Australia National Awards Program

This year’s Occupational Therapy Australia National Awards Program is now open. To apply or read the full information on how to nominate, go to: www.otaus.com.au/about/association-awards/awards-calendar

Opening mid-2014 (for 2015)

2015 Gwendoline Sims Award
The Gwendoline Sims Award recognises excellence in occupational therapy practice.

This biennial Award aims to provide an occupational therapist with financial support to further self education and professional growth, by conducting either a relevant study or an investigative project.

Prize
- The Gwendoline Sims Memorial Award Certificate
- $2,000 to help support self-education and professional growth.

2015 Sylvia Docker Memorial Lecture
The purpose of the lecture is to encourage occupational therapists in their professional careers and to honor those who have made outstanding contributions to occupational therapy.

Prize
- Delivering a lecture at Occupational Therapy Australia’s National Conference
- Travel expenses, accommodation and fees to attend the Conference.

Memorandums of Understanding

IATA
Institute of Access Training Australia
Certificate IV in Access Consulting

Secret Agent Society Practitioner Training
Brisbane Sydney Adelaide Perth
www.sst-institute.net for training dates

Online Professional Development for Health Professionals
10% discount for members of Occupational Therapy Australia
www.pdhealth.com.au

10% of all PD Events
www.compassaustralia.com
Victorian representation update

Following the wonderful success of the Victorian State Conference in May, the Victorian Division has been busy in the past months representing and supporting members in Victoria.

Notably, significant progress has been made by Occupational Therapy Australia in lobbying the TAC and Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA). Important work underway in this area includes:

**TAC and VWA to review occupational therapy services and fees in consultation with Occupational Therapy Australia**

Occupational Therapy Australia members in Victorian received a newsflash e-bulletin in mid-June advising of this significant decision. This review is extensive, and is expected to take a number of months. The Victorian Division is currently holding forums with members and calling for feedback as we prepare to recommend our view for the scope of this review. Please keep watching for more news of the work underway, and please contact memberserv.vic@otaus.com.au if you would like to contribute.

**TAC Amendment Bill 2013 – change to occupational therapy service classification**

This Victorian legislation, passed in November last year, changed the category for occupational therapy services for TAC clients from a classification of ‘rehabilitation services’ under the Transport Accident Act 1986 to ‘medical services’. The Association is currently working with the TAC to clarify relevant policy changes for occupational therapy services as a result of this legislation change.

**“Occupational Physiotherapy” title ceases use**

We are pleased to advise that the Health Services Group (TAC and VWA) has confirmed that as of 16 August, the term “Occupational Physiotherapy” will no longer be used to describe the physiotherapists who provide therapy with a return to work focus for their clients. Occupational Therapy Australia has lobbied extensively since 2008 for this term to be removed on the grounds that it confuses the public, and it misrepresents the role of both physiotherapy and occupational therapy professionals. We believe that this is a great outcome for all involved.

Victorian State Conference competition winner

The Victorian Division wishes to announce that the winner of the $100 CPD voucher for the membership competition run at the Victorian State Conference in May is Jean Neumann. Jean was a conference delegate who renewed her membership with Occupational Therapy Australia prior to 7 July, thus making her eligible to enter this competition.

Congratulations Jean!
Approved.

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Sam Small says ...

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In 2013, only 3.6% of Aon health customers called for free legal advice. If you’re not aware of the range of legal issues you can call up about, read my article on how and what to use your legal helpline for at:

Find out how Sam Small is standing up for small business by visiting aon.com.au/samsmall

aon.com.au/aaot

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