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EDITORIAL

Charting a course for the development of ACN

We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot

Like many an exploration the path to Australian College of Nursing is littered with attempts, missteps, arguments and collegiality but in the end we have reached a desired point that had first been articulated in 1949. While we have that history it is now in many ways the beginning of the real journey. In taking this journey we must chart a new course while being cognisant of the previous paths of both Royal College of Nursing Australia and The College of Nursing. The rich history that both organisations provide is a wonderful point from which to begin our new journey and it is hoped that ultimately the new organisation will be much more than merely the sum of its two predecessor organisations. It gives me great pleasure to be writing this editorial for this particular issue of *Collegian* – The Australian Journal of Nursing Practice, Scholarship and Research which also bears the new branding for ACN. Symbols play a key role in how we view and recognise organisations and in the new symbol for ACN we have brought together in a very modern, symbolic way the three key arms of the organisation – Membership, Education and Representation.

So what is happening and what does 2013 hold for ACN as we move forward on our new path.

Membership engagement structures are being reviewed and renewed to enhance the opportunity for members to engage with ACN both at a local level and nationally. It is clear that nurses are seeking to engage professionally both with issues that are local to them but also to influence the national agenda. Through our engagement structures we are looking to provide greater opportunity for members to be involved and to also have input into the broader policy agenda that ACN engages with. We are also examining our understanding of what it is that members want from ACN and want ACN to do – and considering how well we currently meet those needs and how we may do so into the future.

Education continues to be a key function of ACN. Increasing the availability of our programs nationally is in train.

Targeted CPD courses addressing identified needs are developed specifically on request and support the existing suite of programs available. Largely delivered on line they are an increasing source of quality CPD for nurses right across the country.

Representation on behalf of the nursing profession continues to be a key underpinning of the organisation. Again we are looking at what this means to not only members but the profession more broadly and how do we actively promote the professional nursing viewpoint to relevant decision makers.

The path for ACN will not be smooth – there are still many organisational issues to be sorted through as we bring together the functions and staff from both TCoN and RCNA. I am keenly aware of both the support and the desire of many in the profession to see ACN grow and actively represent the professional view of nurses and nursing in Australia. All of these aspects will be worked through in an ordered and planned way and underpin our ultimate ability to enable ACN to be all that it can be. As we move forward in 2013 we will have the election of the first Board for ACN – the Transitional Board members have provided this initial period of governance and we look forward to the next period. This will be an important milestone in ACN's history.

The ICN Quadrennial Congress will be held in Melbourne in May and will be an exciting time for Australian nurses. This will also see the end of Rosemary Bryant's term as President of ICN and I do think it is wonderful that this is occurring in Australia, that ACN is the member of ICN and that Rosemary is a former Executive Director of RCNA.

Muriel Doherty and Gwen Burbridge were instrumental in the establishment of TCoN and RCNA but there was at that time also a desire to have one professional nursing organisation for Australia. It is now more than 60 years later that this aim has been achieved and I would hope that both these women would be pleased at the final outcome. It would appear that indeed after all our exploring we have finally arrived where we started and know the place for the first time.

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