



# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS REGISTRATION BOARD NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Occupational Therapists Registration Board of Western Australia

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## BOARD MEMBERS

**Ms. Helen Morton** Assoc. (OT) WAIT 1970  
Chairperson and General Manager at  
Armadale Health Service

*Nominated by the Permanent Head of the  
Health Department of Western Australia*

**Ms. Sally Wojnar-Horton** B App Sc (OT)  
WAIT 1974: Grad Dip Health Science  
1981; Masters Health Science 1991

Head of Department at Princess  
Margaret Hospital

*Nominated by OT Australia (Western  
Australian Branch)*

**Dr. Anne Passmore** Assoc (OT) WAIT  
1971: B Sc (OT) WAIT 1982: P Grad Dip  
Health Sc (Ed) Curtin 1987: PhD (West  
Aust)

Lecturer at Curtin University of  
Technology

*Nominated by Curtin University of  
Technology*

**Mr K.R. Jones** B App Sc (OT) WAIT  
1978: Grad Dip Hlth Sc Ed (Curtin) 1985  
Private Practitioner

*Nominated by OT Australia (Western  
Australian Branch)*

**Mrs. M. Duckworh** B App Sc (OT): Grad  
Dip Hlth Sc (Hlth Ed) with Distinction  
Program Manager

Mental Health Services for the Elderly  
Fremantle Hospital and Health Service

*Nominated by OT Australia (Western  
Australian Branch)*

The appointment of a medical  
practitioner, previously held by Dr.  
Penny Flett, remains vacant.

## ADVERTISING

The Board is currently in the process of reviewing the provisions of the Act relating to advertising by occupational therapists with a view to making recommendations to the Hon. Minister for Health to amend the Act. It is anticipated that any future amendments will relax the advertising restrictions currently in place and you will be informed of any changes when further information becomes available.

## COUNCIL OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS REGISTRATION BOARDS (Australia & New Zealand)

The Board has been actively involved in the establishment of the Council of Occupational Therapists Registration Boards (Australia & New Zealand) (COTRB). The Council's initial role will be to examine overseas qualified occupational therapists wishing to obtain registration in Australia. In the future, the Council will also be accrediting occupational therapy courses for recognition by the Boards for registration purposes.

The Commonwealth Government's National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) is currently negotiating to devolve the process of qualification assessments for overseas trained occupational therapists to COTRB.

This followed an invitation by NOOSR to COTRB and OT Australia to submit proposals to take over the assessments as NOOSR is systematically devolving all such processes to professional bodies. OT Australia decided to back the COTRB proposal rather than submit in its own right.

In the meantime, NOOSR, with the assistance of consultant Ms. Maree Dyson, has been developing a new less costly assessment methodology to pass on to COTRB. A workshop on alternative methodologies was held in October with representatives from the Registration Boards, OT Australia, Heads of OT Schools, the NOOSR OT Panel and NOOSR to progress options. The outcomes of the workshop was inconclusive and further options are to be considered.

The COTRB has agreed to become incorporated to facilitate the administration of the devolved assessment process. NOOSR has set a target date of 1 July 1999 for handover of the new methodology to COTRB.

Mrs Helen Morton is the Chairperson of the Council and Kim Bradbury is the Secretary.

## PRACTISING WHILST UNREGISTERED

As you would be aware, it is illegal to practise as an occupational therapist without being registered with the Board.

The Board is currently actively pursuing those occupational therapists whose names were removed from the Register for failing to pay the 1998 annual practising fee, to ascertain if they have continued to practise in this State.

Should the Board become aware of any person who has continued to practise occupational therapy whilst not being registered to do so, it has resolved to take action against them pursuant to the provisions of the Act. Likewise, any employer who has employed an unregistered occupational therapist may also be prosecuted.

The Board will continue this policy during 1999, so it is imperative that you ensure that your practising fee is paid by the due date.

## PRACTICE NAMES

Are you aware that if you wish to practice occupational therapy under a name other than your own, you are required to obtain the Board's approval to do so?

If you wish to make an application to the Board, you should provide:

- (a) A certified Extract of the Registration of Business Name, available from the Ministry of Fair Trading; and
- (b) If the Business Name is owned by a Company, also provide a statutory declaration giving full details of the Directors and Shareholders of the Company.

## RESEARCH GRANTS

The Board will once again consider applications from registered occupational therapists for research grants for 1999. Application forms can be obtained from the office of the Board and should be lodged prior to 28 February 1999.

The Board received applications from occupational therapists for research grants for 1998 and two applications were approved. Details of those grants and progress of results to date are outlined hereunder, together with reports on ongoing projects from previous grants during 1996.

### MS. DIANNE MITCHELL

#### Ongoing validation of assessment and function outcome measures for neurosurgical patients by Occupational Therapists

Ms. Mitchell provided the Board with a paper titled "Self Care Measures Determining Outcomes for Acquired Brain Injured Patients" which she had prepared with the assistance of data obtained whilst researching the above project. Data continues to be analysed and further advice on the progress of the research project will be provided to the Board when finalised.

### MS. AMELDA PRESTON

#### CEREBRAL PALSY ASSOCIATION OF WA A pilot study comparing functional outcomes following serial casting with adults and adolescents with cerebral palsy

This pilot study proposal and application for funding was initiated by Occupational Therapy staff at the Cerebral Palsy Association of Western Australia in 1996. The objective was to determine if a functional change in performance could be achieved after serial casting contracted joints in the upper limb of adult and adolescent clients with Cerebral Palsy. The assessment and casting process commenced in June 1997.

Of 6 clients originally assessed for the study, 4 will complete all of the requirements. This has involved pre-casting assessments of active and passive range of movement, video of the chosen functional task, hand and upper limb assessment using the Modified Solermans Hand and Upper Limb Assessment tool, severity and type of muscle tone and the presence of pain.

Each client underwent serial casting of their upper limb over a period of weeks and all participants were provided with a thermoplastic orthoses immediately after the casting period. The same assessment procedure was then carried out immediately after casting, at 6 months post-casting and again at 12 months post-casting.

This study is now in the final stage of data collection, with one remaining client to be assessed for their 12 month post-casting review.

The analysis of the data collected will be carried out over the next month and the final report with the research findings will be presented to the Board by 31 January 1999.

### MS. JANET SUMMERS

#### Handwriting speed in written exam and its relationship to pencil grip, legibility, style, pain and academic performance

Research on the above project was completed in May 1998, and the results in part were presented in a poster displayed at the WFOT Congress in Montreal in May 1998. Ms Summers advised that it was proposed that the full study would be written up for publication and submitted as a paper at the OT Australia 20th National Congress in Canberra in 1999.

### MS. CAROLINE MATTHEWS

#### Occupational therapy paediatric services in Western Australia: A demographic survey of staffing patterns and service delivery

Ms. Matthews advised that Stage Two of the survey had commenced with a total of 186 questionnaires forwarded to Occupational Therapists known to have a paediatric caseload.

A four week period from 3 August to 28 August inclusive was chosen for data collection following recommendations from the pilot study and so as not to include the school holiday period. Return of the surveys had been pleasing with data entry for analysis commencing.

### OT AUSTRALIA

#### Independent living in the community; Occupational therapy services through pharmacies - feasibility study

In May, 1998, the Board approved a grant for OT Australia to undertake a Feasibility Study to examine the role for occupational therapy services provided through community pharmacies. The Study forms part of a proposed Pilot Project aimed at demonstrating the benefits of occupational therapy services accessed through community pharmacies in maintaining individuals in their home environment.

A Project Officer was engaged and the Feasibility Study commenced 1 July and to date, has:

- \* Contacted OT's nationally and investigated models of service delivery
- \* Investigated literature sources for the Pilot Project
- \* Identified key stakeholders and their issues
- \* Engaged interested community based pharmacies and obtained information related to their knowledge of and need for occupational therapy services
- \* Initiated a 6 week data collection in participating pharmacies to obtain an initial profile of customers who could benefit from occupational therapy services, and the range of items they hire or purchase through pharmacies

- \* Established a database of Pharmacy and national occupational therapy contacts of people interested in the field
- \* Initiated investigation of potential sources of funding the Pilot Project

The initial questionnaire to engage pharmacists in the study went to all 431 members of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (WA Branch) and to date there have been 65 respondents, with 42 agreeing to take part in data collection (32 metro, 10 country).

A report of the Feasibility Study will be available in December 1998 and will outline areas of investigation, information analysis and discussion and recommendations regarding the delivery of Occupational Therapy services through pharmacies. Following the completion of the Study, a proposal for the Pilot Project will be developed, based on recommendations from the Feasibility Study.

### ANNETTE BARTON & VERA RILEY

#### Assessment of motor and process skills (AMPS) of patients having undergone thalamic stimulation system to determine changes in functional capacity

In August 1998 the Board approved a grant towards the above research project.

The OT Department at SCGH commenced research in conjunction with the Australian Neuromuscular Research Institute in March 1998 on studies involving neurosurgical intervention of pallidotomy, and implanting of a thalamic stimulation system. The OT assessment used as part of the research study was the AMPS (Assessment of Motor and Process Skills).

Initially the OT research project focused on "Assessment of Motor and Process skills of patients with Parkinson's Disease pre and post pallidotomy to determine changes in functional capacity". One out of the 4 proposed patients has been assessed by the OT pre-operatively and post-operatively at one month, 3 months and 6 months to date. AMPS results thus far show a gradual gain in motor and process skills since surgery, when the patient is assessed "off medication". When the patient is "on medication" fluctuations in performance are seen, this probably being due to the difficulty in timing assessments at the peak of function when "on medication" for Parkinson's Disease.

The focus of research is now the "Assessment of Motor and Process Skills of patients pre and post implantation of the thalamic stimulation system to determine changes in functional capacity".

The patient population involved in the thalamic stimulation system study includes those with essential tremor, Parkinson Disease or tremor post trauma.

The pilot study is due to conclude in June 1999.