



# Wounds Australia 2016: The State of Play

**Andrea Minnis**  
**Conference Committee Chair, Wounds Australia**

The inaugural *Wounds Australia* conference was held in Melbourne from 9 – 12 November, 2016, and what an outstanding success it was. The largest conference ever undertaken since our inception as the *Australian Wound Management Association* (now *Wounds Australia*), with over 1200 registrations.

Our conference kicked off in style, with an amazing array of presentations and discussions over the ten pre-conference workshops held on Wednesday, 8 November 2016, that covered:

- *Compression therapy for lower leg oedema*, with Melinda Brooks and her support team; Toni Howells, Kylie Elder, Ai Wei Ng and Kate Maguire, followed by an inspiring session on *Compression and lymphoedema* with Jan Rice, Dr. David Keast, and Assoc. Prof. Emily Haesler.
- Some great debate and discussion in the *Grand Round*; Terry Swanson, Dr. Stephen Yelland, Dr. David Keast and Prof. David Armstrong.
- *Pressure injuries and ACSQHC Standard 8* with Anne Marie Dunk and Judith Barker, who later teamed up with Prof. Dominic and Dr. Penny Upton to discuss the *Wellbeing of wounds*.
- *Diabetic foot assessment* with Sonja Rogasch, Eva Staunton and Nikki Frescos, who was joined later in the afternoon by Charlotte Cooke and the enigmatic Prof. David Armstrong, to discuss *Off-loading in the diabetic foot*.
- *Wound assessment using cameras, documentation and their legal implications* with Dr. Bill McGuinness and Prof. Patrick Keyzer.
- *Pressure injures – How much time does it take to get a pressure injury*, with Prof. Amit Gefen and Jillian Swaine.

- *The ABCs of topical wound management*, with Fleur Tresize (this was so popular we repeated this workshop in both sessions).

Delegates were buzzing after the workshops. There was an air of excitement, as more delegates arrived to register for the conference and prepare for the official opening of the exhibition hall. Delegates and exhibitors were entertained by a wonderful group of talented young Aussies from *Centrestage*, who worked the crowd and then provided a colourful and dynamic performance thoroughly enjoyed by all. Drinks flowed and the 400 delegates enjoyed delicious canapés. Old friends were welcomed and new friends were made.

After the welcome reception, it was an honour for the conference organising committee to escort our invited speakers to a wonderful dinner at *Crowne*, where the food and wine was divine and the conversation absolutely sparkling. We were entertained by the *Gas lights at Crowne* and the vibe of the evening set the tone for what was to come. Guests were presented with a limited edition Bendigo pottery plate (designed by Haidyn Minnis) in appreciation of their contribution to the conference.



*Guests presented with limited edition Bendigo pottery plate, designed by Haidyn Minnis.*

Day one of the conference opened with our Wound Ambassador, Denise Drysdale's recording for *Wound Awareness Week*, followed by our official welcome. The traditional *Welcome to Country* from Bill Nicholson provided us with an engaging insight and was followed by the haunting sounds of the Didgeridoo, skillfully played by Bill's son, Damien.

Gary Bain then took to stage in his role as conference Master of Ceremonies and he did an amazing job throughout the conference, engaging delegates and speakers, providing us with some thought provoking questions and quite a few laughs along

the way! I cannot speak highly enough of the work that Gary put both into the lead up and during the conference. He really was the thread that tied it all together.



L - R: Andrea Minnis, Melinda Brooks, Gary Bain, Jan Rice

Our plenary sessions during the conference were engaging, informative, thought provoking and inspiring. They commenced with Prof. Phillip Clarke and Dr. Rosanna Norman, setting the scene with health economics and the lesson for managing wounds in the setting of chronic disease. Professor David Margolis, Assoc. Prof. Geoff Sussman, Dr. Greg Schultz, Terry Swanson and Lyn Thomas followed, with a stimulating discussion around antibiotic stewardship, infection and our microbial community, biofilm and an overview of the pending *Wounds Australia Aseptic Non-Touch Technique Consensus Document*. This was followed with a session focusing on acute wound management, presented by Kylie Sandy-Hodgetts. Professor Fiona Woods and Prof. Amit Gefen discussed burns and surgical site dehiscence. Dr. John Crozier delivered a, while confronting, exceptional presentation on pressure injuries with violent trauma. There was also a testament to modern technology and true professionalism, as, being prevented from attending the conference in Melbourne by a burns emergency, Prof. Fiona Woods delivered her presentation over the phone from Perth while her slides were presented on screen in Melbourne.

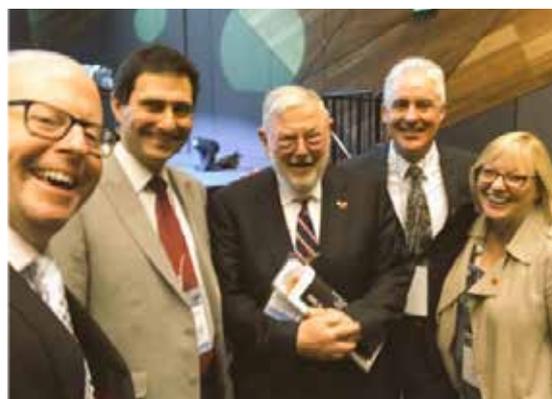
One of the most overwhelming and emotional moments of plenary was our tribute to a wonderful friend, colleague and mentor Sandy Dean. Sandy was widely recognised for making a difference in wound management, and ultimately for people with chronic and complex wounds. She was a Fellow of the *Australian Wound Management Association*, past *AWMA National Nursing Representative*, past president of *AWMA (VIC)* and a leader in the field of wound management. The Victorian branch of *Wounds Australia* has established the *Sandy Dean Memorial Grant* in recognition and commemoration of Sandy's extraordinary work in wound management. The grant is aimed at supporting members to attend a state, national

or international conference in the field of wound management, to promote the networking and professional development Sandy was so very passionate about. We were truly privileged to have Sandy's husband, Stephen, join us on stage to provide a very moving insight into her passion and her ongoing legacy, and to also have Stephen and Sandy's daughter, Claire, in the audience, to share this very special tribute. The generosity of Stephen and his family was again showcased, with Stephen announcing that he will match the grant funded by *Wounds Australia*, essentially doubling the funding available for our members. A generous man with a heart of gold.



*Sandy Dean: Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.*

Day two plenaries were just as exceptional as day one's. The sessions were kicking goals, with extraordinary presentations on diabetes, obesity and orthopaedic issues presented by Associate Prof. Jonathan Shaw, Prof. John Funder, Prof. David Armstrong and Dr. Geoff Tymms. This was followed in style, with presentations to help us untangle leg ulcer aetiology, modern interventions to manage venous disease and the state of play in lymphoedema management and compression. These were presented by Dr. Mark Jackson, Dr. Claire Campbell (who not only gave a sensational presentation but had also given birth four weeks prior to the conference) and Dr. Carolina Weller, respectively, setting the scene for some thought provoking Q&A in Saturday's panel discussion.



*Plenary speakers L - R: Prof. David Armstrong, Prof. John Shaw, Prof. John Funder, Gary Bain, Cate Bain*

Our plenaries were rounded off on Saturday with presentations of such quality that we could have extended the conference a little longer! Once again, modern technology saved the day, as Prof. David Armstrong had to travel back to the USA a little earlier than planned and, ever the professional, offered to pre-record his session before he left. What a privilege it was to sit in a virtually empty plenary to listen to the presentation recording and the Q&A session that followed with Gary Bain. We hope to have this uploaded in full to the *Wounds Australia* website soon. Believe me, it's well worth a watch! Professors David Armstrong, David Margolis and Amit Gefen led us through some of the controversies in wound care, and stimulated some great discussion, which fed beautifully into our panel discussion chaired by Assoc. Prof. Geoff Sussman. Geoff led our panel of Prof. Phillip Clarke, Dr. Bill McGuinness, Suzanne Kapp, Dr. Alessandra Doolan, Jane Gallagher and Ash Long. The discussion generated was inspiring and it was particularly poignant to hear from consumer Ash Long, not only about his own wound journey, but his views on how to get the message out there. We have some work to do, but all great things start with one idea!



*Prof. Amit Gefen*



*The panel*

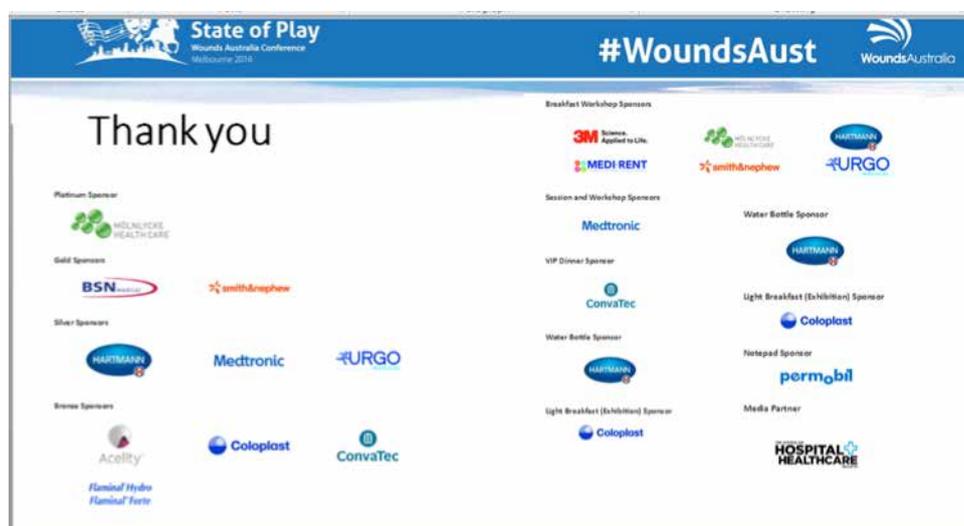
During the last day of plenary, the Chair of the *Wounds Australia* board, Helen McGregor, announced the recipients of the *Wounds Australia Fellowship* award and the *Wounds Australia Clinician* award.

Sincere congratulations to Prof. Helen Edwards, who was awarded the *Wounds Australia Fellowship* in recognition of outstanding and significant service to *Wounds Australia* (formerly known as *Australian Wound Management Association*) and wound management within Australia and internationally. Professor Edwards is recognised for her research leadership (research career, NHMRC and ARC grants, leadership, publications), clinical leadership (innovative clinical practice), educational leadership and contribution to *Wounds Australia*.

Congratulations, also, to Louise Macinnes, recipient of the 2017 *Wounds Australia Clinician's award*. The *Wounds Australia Clinician's award* is given to a *Wounds Australia* member who is acknowledged as a best practice clinician/mentor/educator, recognised by patients, clients, and/or colleagues as an outstanding wound management health professional, whose practice makes a difference. Louise receives the award in recognition of her high level of commitment to the wound care profession, being highly regarded by patients, clients and colleagues as a strong leader who has a positive influence on colleagues, inspires others and builds healthy partnerships.

Helen McGregor also acknowledged the outstanding contribution of Prof. Michael Woodward in his role as joint editor of the *Wounds Australia Journal, Wound Practice and Research*. Michael has held this role for the past 12 years, and is now retiring from the position. Michael was presented with a certificate and a gift as a token of appreciation by the *Wounds Australia* board.

The plenaries were not the only showcase of the extraordinary talent we enjoy, both in Australia and beyond. Our lunch breaks were highlighted with a variety of poster presentations in electronic format, with presenting authors demonstrating the exceptional work that is being done across the country and internationally.



*The many trade exhibits added to the appeal of the conference*

Corporate sponsors offered delegates more thought provoking presentations, not only during lunch breaks, but at breakfast sessions throughout the conference. Our corporate sponsorship was second to none, and I cannot thank trade enough for their support. The exhibition hall was awesome and the buzz in the crowd was electric.

Our concurrent sessions were extremely popular, and, although there was a tight timeframe for delegates to move between sessions, the team at *Conlog* ran timings with military precision. To watch the doors open for one minute and see delegates move smoothly through the corridors of the *Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre* to their next session was a sight to behold.

Sessions covered such a wide variety of topics including; psychological impact, pressure injuries, research translation, negative pressure, wound service teams, wounds in the community, palliative care, infections and dressings, ageing, skin integrity, chronic wounds and tissue repair, acute wounds, diversity (culture/low income) and wounds in developing countries, chronic wounds, wound innovations, diabetic wounds and an international session featuring the *European Wound Management Association's (EWMA)* president, Severin Lauchli, and *EWMA* council member, Sebastian Probst, from Switzerland. My sincere thanks to all concurrent session chairs and presenters:

Allison Cowin	Toni Howells	Anthony Dyer
Charlotte Cooke	Ann Marie Dunk	Dominic Upton
Eva Staunton	Charne Miller	Fleur Trezise
Harikrishna Nair	Emily Haesler	Judith Barker
Kate Maguire	Jillian Swaine	Keryln Carville
Kylie Elder	Katy Melrose	Greg Schultz
Geoff Tymms	Geoff Sussman	Jan Rice
Jane Gallagher	Helen McGregor	Judith Barker
Michael Woodward	Mark Jackson	Melinda Brooks
Patrick Keyzer	Nick Santamaria	Nikki Frescos
Sonja Rogasch	Penney Upton	Philip Clarke
	Stephen Yelland	Suzanne Kapp

Charne Miller and her team of judges reviewed each of the presentations entered for judging in the *Brightsky New Investigator* award and *Best Poster* award and while it was a very close race the winners were:

### Brightsky New Investigator award:

Margie Moncrieff, Flinders Medical Centre:  
*Reducing surgical site infection in women having caesarean section, using a preventative care bundle.*

### Best Poster award

Elaheh Taghipour, University of Canberra:  
*The burden experienced by caregivers of those with chronic wounds: a systematic review.*

Congratulations to both recipients, who receive a free registration to the *Wounds Australia 2018* conference in Adelaide.

It was extremely important to the conference organising committee that Remembrance Day was commemorated, to remember those who have served and those who have fallen in all wars and armed conflicts. Each delegate was presented with a poppy at the beginning of the day. It was truly a wonderful sight to see so many delegates wearing them with such pride. Just before 11am, the lights in the exhibition hall were dimmed in preparation for a short presentation by Dr. Graeme Killer, which was both poignant and sobering. Col. Jan Rice in full uniform read the ode, followed by bugler, Steve Semmler Farr, playing the last post. One minute's silence was observed by a full exhibition hall; the silence ending with the sounds of *the Rouse*, played, once again, by Steve. It was a spine tingling service and one that brought many, including myself, to tears.



*A spine tingling Remembrance Day service, Col. Jan Rice in full regalia*

While the conference is all about learning, sharing and networking, the social side of life cannot go unmarked. Friday was the night to celebrate and we did it in style! Our glitzy and glamorous conference dinner was held in the ballroom the Grand Hyatt

Hotel, Melbourne. Pre-dinner drinks were a great way to warm up and meet our *Wounds Australia* ambassador, Denise Drysdale, who is not only a great ambassador but so very generous with her time, stopping to chat to delegates, indulging photo opportunities and giving us all a wonderful surprise with an impromptu 20-minute stand-up comedy act after our main course!

We were thoroughly entertained from the get go, with the magnificent voice of Samantha Uren to welcome us into the Grand Ballroom and the band, *Orange Whip*, helping to dance the night away. Delegates embraced their creative side when asked to make hats from donated expired dressing stock for a hat parade. The parade was wonderful and hilarious at the same time. Denise judged the parade with the assistance of her 'volunteers,' Sebastian Probst and Severin Lauchli from EWMA. Congratulations to our winner, Troy Bryan, and also to Tania Hobbs, who won the bottle of vodka personally signed by Robert de Niro! The food was fabulous and the night was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



*Winner of the hat parade Troy Bryan*

So much preparatory work and attention to detail ensured this conference was truly one to remember, and the catering was no exception! The diverse menu provided by the amazing catering staff at the *Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre* was nothing short of brilliant. Just to tantalise the taste buds, over the length of the conference, our menu offered treats such as; soft rice paper rolls with prawn and pork, miniature red onion marmalade tarts with blue cheese, peking duck with cucumber, sher wagyu beef slider with pickled zucchini, crisp panko crumbed king prawn skewer with lime and chive aioli hoisin, poached chicken, avocado, compressed verjuice fennel on organic rye, roast beef, bell pepper, horseradish mayonnaise, seeded sourdough rolls, superfood salad with kale, goji berries, chia seeds, corn, fresh jalapeño and wild rice topped with fetta and a raspberry mustard dressing just to name a few. Live food cooking stations were on offer during Thursday and Friday, themed on Melbourne street food:

- Lygon Street: Pan-fried parmesan gnocchi, wild-mushroom ragu and goats cheese.
- Brunswick Street: Pulled Sher Wagyu beef slider, pickled zucchini, chimichurri sauce in charcoal bun.
- Little Bourke Street: Giant steamer baskets with chicken and vegetarian dumplings.
- St Kilda beach: Crisp fried panko squid rings tossed in tagarashi seasoning, tonkatsu ketchup and kewpie mayonnaise.

Desserts were equally amazing, including chocolate and caramel mousse with honey roasted macadamia and, my favourite, two scoops of the *Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre's* award winning hazelnut ice-cream served ready to go. Just because you can never have enough chocolate, the 2018 conference organising committee tempted us with one of the many well-known South Australian treats by chiseling through 9kg blocks of Haigh's chocolate! Can't wait to see what's in store for *Wounds Australia 2018!*



*The conference would not be possible without the team behind it*

Such an amazing event would not be possible without a dedicated and passionate team, and it has been both an honour and a privilege to lead this 2016 conference team. I am sincerely humbled to have worked with this amazing group of people and cannot thank them enough for their tireless work. Behind the scenes, our conference organising committee and scientific committees, in conjunction with the incredible team from *Conlog*, had been meeting monthly until October 2014, where we ramped up to weekly and have maintained that schedule for the past two years! To see such an incredible amount of work come to fruition is so very rewarding. The journey we have been on since the announcement of the 2016 conference at the Gold Coast in 2014 has been amazing; getting to know each other, forming our scientific, social, marketing and budget committees, choosing our conference venue, our speakers, touring Melbourne for our dinner venues, our Master of Ceremonies, our menu (which included meeting with the *Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre* chef for a tasting of course), our

speaker gifts, the design for delegate bags, accessories... Truly the list is endless, but it gives you an idea of the dedication and commitment this team has had in order to bring such an event to you. The team from *Conlog*, led by Leanne Gollasch, were incredible. Sincere thanks goes to Leanne, Sam, Nicole, Claire, Dave, Sharon, Jane, Sarah and Gina, for everything. The 2018 conference is in safe hands!

An event such as this would also be impossible without the calibre of speakers that made the conference program showcased in Melbourne, owed to the passion, forethought and creativity of the Chair of the Scientific Committee, Assoc. Prof. Geoff Sussman. My sincere thanks and congratulations to Geoff and the scientific team. While I have left them until last, this does not reflect the level of importance I place on the unbelievable conference organising committee. I cannot thank the committee enough, for all the work they have put in during the lead up and throughout the conference; timekeeping, assisting delegates, supporting each plenary, concurrent and poster session and flying the flag for *Wounds Australia*! You are an amazing team and have been an incredible support to me. Special thanks to my colleague, friend and mentor, Jan Rice, and to my dear friend, Toni Howells, who has kept me sane.

While it has been an enormous amount of work, we have laughed and we have certainly had some fun – culminating in one of the highlights for me, the conference committee presenting me with a life size cut out of Hugh Jackman at our meeting prior to the workshops. There is a background to this but I will leave that to your imagination, but, needless to say, I remain on the campaign for our next ambassador!

What a stunning week it has been, but, as they say, all good things must come to an end. It has been a privilege.

See you in Adelaide 2018



**Conference organising committee:**

*Back row: L – R: Paul Philcox, Geoff Sussman, Nikki Frescos, Bill McGuinness*

*Middle row: L – R: Donna Hickling, Sally James, Andrea Minnis, Hannah Tudor,  
Charne Miller*

*Front row: L – R: Melinda Brooks, Toni Howells, Ai Wei Ng, Gill Butcher, Jan Rice,  
Di Carr, Terry Swanson*

*Absent from photo: Tabatha Rando, Casie Barrette*

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