



Australian and New Zealand FORENSIC SCIENCE SOCIETY



January 2006
Issue 16

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NSW Branch Newsletter

NSW Branch ANZFSS Inc ABN 33-502-753-392

Happy New Year!!

I would like to wish everyone a happy new year, and hope that you all had a safe and enjoyable festive season. Thank you for your patience while awaiting this installment of the NSW Branch Newsletter. I'm sure you can appreciate that with no urgent business to attend to, it was an excellent opportunity for me to catch up on non-ANZFSS matters!

Over the past few months, we have heard of several members falling ill, and some with relatives or loved-ones unwell. Our thoughts are with you and wish all involved a speedy recovery.

We must also announce that our lovely Vice President Kirsty McAllister accepted an inter-state position at the end of 2005 and has left us for another branch of the ANZFSS! We would like to thank Kirsty for her contributions to NSW ANZFSS over several years. While it is sad to see her go, we wish her all the best in her new endeavours.

So we have here a bumper edition to start off the new year, complete with my review of three presentations from last year, some new dates to note in your diary for this year's schedule, some more idioms from Donnah, some book reviews, the results of our membership card competition, and plenty more!

Don't forget that we would love to hear from you too. Thank you to all those who sent us feedback throughout the year - it is much appreciated. If you have read a related book during the break, please let us know what you thought of it. If you know of an upcoming conference we have not mentioned, please tell us about it so we can pass it on. Also think about joining the NSW Branch Committee this year. The more people that contribute, the greater the wealth of information this Society can offer! Speaking of people who contribute, I would like to thank the Committee for their hard work, and my dear husband Philip for all his assistance and patience with this newsletter over the past two years.

I hope this edition is enjoyed by all, and also hope to see you at our future meetings. *Shaheen Aumeer-Donovan*



Renewal Reminder



2006 Renewals

**Renewal forms will be posted out in the
last week of January 2006**

Please check the details

Make sure you sign it

And return with your payment

Thank you

Please note: a "grace period" exists after your formal reminder for membership renewal.
If your membership is not attended to during this grace period,
newsletter correspondence will cease.

Should you wish to discontinue your membership to this society,
please refer to Section 2.5 of our constitution:

2.5 Resignation of membership and Expulsion:

Any member may by writing to the Secretary of the Branch resign his/her membership. Any member whose subscription remains unpaid for six months after it has become due and payable upon being duly notified by the Secretary of the Branch of such fact and nevertheless failing to pay his/her subscription within a further two months shall cease to be a member, unless the Committee of the Branch otherwise determines.

Please mention to new members being signed up that the Committee meets at least once every two months, and that there will therefore be a time delay between receipt of the application and ratification. If the application and fee has been received and is being processed, prospective new members may enter meetings at the member rate.

Welcome to New Society Members

The NSW Branch extends a warm welcome to our newly ratified members:

Christina ANTONYPILLAI
Nerida CAMPBELL
Petine CARRUTHERS-QUA
Lisa COTTERILL
Anne KWOK
Elysabeth LEIGH
John LINTON
Colin MCGREGOR
Sienna MORGAN
Allan MURRAY
Clare ROBESON
Belinda ROTHERY
Rebecca TANCRED



Peyton TANG
Natalie WATSON
Sarah WOOD

Membership Card Competition

Congratulations to Marcus Robinson who was the winner of our membership card competition with the entry below. Marcus wins an ANZFSS t-shirt for his efforts. So look out for your membership cards, they will be posted soon!





Message from the President

Dear ANZFSS members,

On behalf of the Society, I wish you and your family a healthy, successful and happy New Year. We are at this time of the year when we all have our New Year's resolutions. On the professional front in 2006, I am sure most of us wish more funding, more support, improved ethics, better science and better justice, fostered collaborations, more training and education...better wages, etc. However, if we scratch the surface, the reality is we all have different needs and aspirations.

The name of the game can then be summarised in two words: fun and passion. All the hard work and frustrations disappear as long as we can keep the passion for our work and have fun on some (or many!) occasions.

I believe our Society has a significant role to play to keep the professional momentum in our lives. The committee is already working on an exciting program for the year, including the traditional career event (Inside the Forensic World), a public night and our annual dinner.

Our Society's symposium will also be held in April in WA, with some possibilities for our branch to organise the 2010 event (Victoria will organise the 2008 symposium).

In the short-term, I invite you to come along and listen to our first speaker of the year, Prof. Christophe Champod whose presentation is entitled "The Strength of Scientific Evidence - DNA, Fingerprints and the Illusion of Certainty". The New Year's resolution here would be a common approach to the evaluation of scientific evidence for "classic identification sciences" (eg. fingerprints, toolmarks, etc) and for DNA. Prof. Champod has been at the forefront of this field for the last 15 years and I have no doubt his presentation will be very interesting and intriguing for many of us. I hope to meet you there.



Claude Roux
President
13th January, 2006

MEETINGS FOR 2006

The idea to propose meeting dates at the start of the year was well received last year, as it allows us to book the meeting rooms in advance and for you to plan ahead to come to these events. **Please put the following dates in your diary:**

Note that unless a firm notice is placed in the newsletter, these dates are **tentative** and will depend on availability of speakers to some extent. Any change of date or venue will be remitted to you through the newsletter ASAP. Hope to see you there!

Wednesday, 15th February	Christophe Champod (See Page 4)
Wednesday, 15th March	AGM (See Page 4) & Talk TBA
Wednesday, 26th April	TBA
Wednesday, 17th May	TBA
Wednesday, 21st June	TBA
Saturday, 15th July	Inside the Forensic World
Wednesday, 16th August	TBA
Wednesday, 22nd September	TBA
Wednesday, 18th October	TBA
Wednesday, 24th November	Annual Dinner & Talk TBA



NEXT MEETING: "The Strength of Scientific Evidence - DNA, Fingerprints and the Illusion of Certainty" by Christophe Champod

DATE: Wednesday, 15th February 2006

TIME: 6:30pm for light refreshments, 7pm start

VENUE: Department of Forensic Medicine,
50 Parramatta Road, Glebe

COST: Free to members, \$5 for non-members

Christophe Champod received his M.Sc. and Ph.D. (summa cum laude) both in Forensic Science, from the University of Lausanne, in 1990 and 1995 respectively. Remained in academia until holding the position of assistant professor in forensic science. From 1999 to 2003, he led the Interpretation Research Group of the Forensic Science Service (UK), before taking a professorship position at the School of Criminal Sciences (ESC) / Institute of Forensic Science (IPS) of the University of Lausanne. He is in charge of education and research on identification methods (detection and

identification). He is member of the International Association for Identification and was elected in 2004 as a member of the FBI-sponsored SWGFAST. His research is devoted to the statistical evaluation of forensic identification techniques. The value of fingerprint evidence is at the core of his interests.

Christophe Champod will explain to us in this colourful presentation the use and misuse of statistics in the interpretation of forensic evidence. He will relate the mistakes in various cases around the world, including the Madrid train bombing, and how we can avoid repeating these mistakes. He will talk about ideas from controversial authors and show us how important the way in which we articulate evidence is. We hope you will be able to join us to welcome Christophe all the way from Switzerland.

We are pleased to announce our:

2006 Annual General Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, 15th March 2006

TIME: 5:30pm for nibbles, 6:00pm start (note that a talk will follow - to be announced)

VENUE: Department of Forensic Medicine, 50 Parramatta Road, Glebe

Our AGM must be held within 3 months of the end of the Society's financial year (Jan-Dec), and has been scheduled in March to comply with this. Your attendance is important as failure to reach a quorum will result in the AGM being declared invalid and rescheduled. **Ensure that your voice is heard** by participating - and don't be afraid to bring along queries, concerns and topics for discussion.

Please also consider joining the NSW branch committee. We meet before the talks each month, coordinate and plan events, correspond with members, and ensure that the Society runs smoothly. Take the time to become involved and you will be sure to find this a very rewarding experience - and meet many interesting people.





REVIEW: "Murder in Anna Bay" by Detective Sergeant Peter Fox ANZFSS Public Night, Friday 30th September 2005

In September we were pleased to hold a Public Event delving into the Murder of Judith Brown in Anna Bay, NSW. We would like to apologise for the technical difficulties encountered at the start of the evening that resulted in some delays and interruptions.

Detective Sergeant Peter Fox presented a chilling first-hand account of his investigation, which required 18 months of obtaining evidence that eventually pointed the finger at Judith's husband Ross Brown as being her killer.

Detective Fox began with a detailed history of the couple and their children, allowing us to see Judith as a person before turning to the events of the 2nd June 2000. On this day, Judith was found bludgeoned to death just inside her front door. Her husband claimed to have found her in this state after returning from his regular routine. We were shown photographs of the crimescene and extensive footage of interview with Ross Brown that transported us into the moment and helped us to understand the horrific events that had taken place and the nature of the task facing investigators.

The investigation was very detailed, and we were shown not only how careful observation and pertinent interview technique, but also how thoughtful deductive reasoning and piecing together of information could lead to the conclusions reached in this case. We were presented with seemingly



Detective Sergeant Peter Fox

unimportant observations that later were tested and found to be significant and useful in the case. Some examples include:

- ◆ The presence and state of Judith's belongings that allowed a precise time of death to be determined;
- ◆ A basket of washed clothes that did not concur with Ross Brown's version of events;
- ◆ The absence of a receipt or video footage of Ross Brown at the time he claims to have purchased some beer;
- ◆ The distribution of fragments from the glass beer bottles dropped by Ross Brown at the front door when he discovered his wife that did not correspond to the control tests conducted;
- ◆ The presence of a ring of blood on the hallway partition that corresponded to the size of the ring on the base of the glass beer bottles;
- ◆ The tracing of bloody footprints from Ross Brown and the family dog that did not make sense according to Ross Brown's version of events;
- ◆ The missing statue that was likely to have been used in the murder;
- ◆ Eyewitnesses and Ross Brown's testimony and behaviour during and after the event.

This presentation was highly interactive. We were even given the opportunity to feel for ourselves the weight of the murder weapon when a replica of the missing statue was passed around. Detective Fox also ensured that the children were not forgotten in this and conveyed to us the toll these events would have taken on them.

The result of this extensive investigation was a very convincing circumstantial case against Ross Brown, and a presentation that was at times frightening but certainly very thought-provoking. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. We would like to thank Detective Fox and his wife for taking the time to present to us this fascinating case.

Review by Shaheen Aumeer-Donovan



REVIEW: "Investigation into the Folbigg Children Deaths" **by Detective Inspector Bernie Ryan** **ANZFSS Meeting, Wednesday 26th October 2005**

Our October meeting featured Detective Inspector Bernie Ryan who spoke to us about Operation Open Bay that involved his investigation into the deaths of the four Folbigg children from 1989 to 1999 at Mayfield (Newcastle), Thornton (Maitland) and Singleton.

Detective Ryan began with a history of the Folbigg family and the life and death of each of the children, followed by his investigation that led to the conviction of their mother, Kathleen Folbigg, for their murders.

Kathleen was born in 1967 to Kathleen Donovan and her defacto Thomas Britton in Balmain, Sydney. When Kathleen was 5 months old, her father murdered her mother. She became a ward of the state and was placed in foster care in Newcastle. At the age of 20 she married Craig Folbigg.

Caleb Gibson Folbigg was born on 1st February 1989. He was diagnosed with a lazy larynx or stridor which meant he had trouble feeding and breathing simultaneously. At 2:50am on the 20th February 1989 Caleb was found dead. General duties police attended without a crime scene unit or detective. SIDS was concluded as the cause of death and the body was cremated.

Patrick Allen David Folbigg was born on 30th June 1990 and underwent sleep studies in an attempt to avoid the same fate as Caleb. On 18th October 1990 Patrick suffered an Apparent Life Threatening Event (ALTE). He was allegedly found by his mother in the cot with laboured breathing. This hypoxic episode led doctors to treat him for meningitis and herpes encephalitis as a precautionary measure. Patrick developed cortical blindness and suffered seizures. At this point, Kathleen's diaries indicated that she was considering leaving the family. 1 week later Patrick was found dead. The cause of death was written up as asphyxia due to airway obstruction from epileptic fit. The hospital post mortem found scarring in the occipital lobes that were



Detective Inspector Bernie Ryan

indicative of the injury sustained at 4 months. No other cause of death could be established, and the body was cremated.

Kathleen and Craig Folbigg moved to Maitland. Sarah Folbigg was born on the 14th October 1992, and also underwent sleep studies. On 29th August 1993 Sarah's bed was moved into her parents room because of the sleep apnoea blanket. That night, Kathleen could not put the child to bed, and threw the child at her husband in temper. That night, Craig awoke to his wife's screams, and Sarah was dead. General Duties Officers and Detectives attended, examined and photographed the scene. Prof. John Hilton, chairman of SIDS International Council, performed the autopsy, noting punctuate abrasions on Sarah's chin and an elongated uvula. Nevertheless, he determined the cause of death as SIDS and the body was cremated.

Kathleen and Craig Folbigg moved to Singleton. Laura Elizabeth Folbigg was born on the 7th August 1997 and underwent extensive sleep studies at Westmead Children's Hospital. She had minor central apnoea, but no obstructive apnoea. Laura was sent home with a corometrics monitor. In February of 1999 Kathleen threatened to leave her husband. On the 1st March 1999 Kathleen lost control and screamed at Laura. The next day Craig went to work. Kathleen and Laura went to the gym and met Craig at work for morning tea.



REVIEW: "Investigation into the Folbigg Children Deaths" ...Continued by Detective Inspector Bernie Ryan ANZFSS Meeting, Wednesday 26th October 2005

Kathleen says Laura went to sleep in the car at 11am and she carried her into her bed still asleep. At 11:30am Kathleen heard Laura coughing. She checked on her 5 min later and found her deceased in her bed. Kathleen carried Laura to the kitchen counter as she had been instructed, started CPR and called 000.

Detective Ryan played the 000 call for us that was received at 12:05pm. At 12:17pm the ambulance arrived. An ECG monitor indicated a state of bradycardia, then asystole. Her death was pronounced at Singleton Hospital.

Detective Ryan then became involved in the investigation. He obtained statements from Kathleen and Craig Folbigg. Craig informs the police about the previous deaths and a crimescene is established at their home.

The scene appeared to be inconsistent with Kathleen's version of events: Laura's sandals and bottle were found in another part of the house, and the monitor was in the lounge room on charge instead of in Laura's room.

The autopsy showed no obvious signs of trauma, petichial haemorrhage, trauma around the airway, subdural haemorrhage (indicative of shaken baby syndrome). Microscopic studies found myocarditis that could explain the death but seemed unlikely given the circumstances. Therefore the cause of death was given as undetermined.

Detective Ryan then showed us a video about the Hoyt family who had experienced similar deaths in their children. The video showed some of the research that had been conducted and refuted, as well as an explanation of such syndromes as Munch-Hausen, where parents abuse their children in an attempt to obtain the attention and sympathy of doctors and others.

While Detective Ryan now does not believe that Kathleen suffered from Munch-Hausen syn-

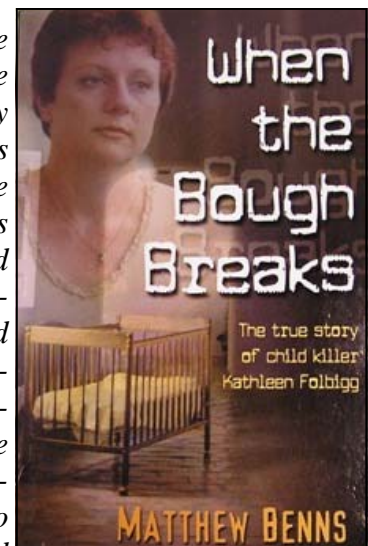
drome, it was all part of the research that he had to explore during the investigation. The deaths of the Folbigg children were examined individually and collectively by experts from around the world, and the conclusion was that their deaths were consistent with deliberate suffocation.

This evidence, along with entries from Kathleen's diaries, results from telephone intercepts and listening devices, search warrants seizing other diaries were all presented before the court.

The hard work done by Detective Ryan to bring medical evidence, coincidence evidence and tendency evidence to the court resulted in the conviction of Kathleen Folbigg for manslaughter, maliciously inflicting grievous bodily harm and 3 murders.

We would like to thank Detective Inspector Bernie Ryan for speaking to us and shedding some light on the tragic deaths of Caleb, Patrick, Sarah and Laura Folbigg.

I recently read the book "When the Bough Breaks" by Matthew Benns which also tells the story of the deaths of the children and the events that followed. It included high praise for Detective Ryan's involvement in the case as a young detective with much to lose personally and professionally by bringing this case before the courts because of the taboo nature of the events. I recommend this light reading for anyone who is especially interested in reading more of Kathleen Folbigg's diary entries. - Shaheen Aumeer-Donovan





REVIEW: "The Asian Tsunami Revisited" by Peter Ellis ANZFSS Meeting & Annual Dinner, Friday 25th November 2005

Our annual dinner was held at the Lighthouse in Paramatta. The weather was warm and the food very nice. It was cosy in our room and a nice time was spent by all catching up with friends from the Society they had not seen for a while.

Peter Ellis kindly joined us to present his experiences as one of the first Australians to arrive in Thailand to assist with Disaster Victim Identification (DVI). He shared with us a photodocumentary of his time spent there along with a personal account that was very much appreciated.

We were able to see what the first respondents saw, the devastation caused by the floodwaters and the fast degradation caused by the salt, the sun and the heat. Bodies everywhere decomposing.

Peter highlighted the different steps that needed to be taken from both a public relations point of view and a forensic science point of view. He explained that without the public relations, there was not going to be any forensic science conducted, and this was the downfall of some other countries that came to assist. Thailand is an independent country that was asking for assistance, not for other countries to take over, and unfortunately some countries did not recognise this. Australia took another approach and by suggestion of which steps to take rather than dictation, the resulting co-operation between countries proved much more productive.

Photographs of the deceased, even the badly disfigured and decomposed were posted around Thailand for relatives to identify loved-ones by, resulting in more distress and erroneous identifications. In addition, Thai helpers were removing personal effects from the bodies for whatever reason (perhaps for safe-keeping or to return to the relatives) without making records, which would make it even more difficult to identify bodies.



Peter Ellis and Claude Roux

Peter described the progression over the first few weeks from some other teams conducting open-air autopsies, to fully functioning DVI rooms complete with refrigerated containers for storing bodies, autopsy and x-ray facilities. He then showed us the outcomes of their efforts, with surprisingly most bodies being identified by dental evidence and fingerprints, rather than DNA. In addition to the obvious problems with obtaining post mortem information, there was a deficiency of ante mortem records that somewhat hindered the reconciliation process. A board was instituted to maintain the standard of identification at a high level, and thus combinations of different forensic processes were often used for official identification.

Peter discussed some of the lessons learnt from the experience, including both the positive and negative aspects such as the lack of information on counseling services available after his return from Thailand.

We thank Peter and his wife Sue for attending our annual dinner and for candidly sharing the experience of a DVI expert during the Asian Tsunami.

Review by Shaheen Aumeer-Donovan

New ANZFSS Website

The ANZFSS now has its own brand new website! Check it out, the URL is:

www.anzfss.org.au

We will now have the opportunity to set up a personalised NSW branch web page if possible this year.



IDIOM INVESTIGATION: Breaking Down the Lingo

By Donnah Day

Ever had trouble understanding a forensic scientist, police officer or lawyer? Never fear! Donnah is here to analyse the jargon for us.

FIREARMS:



There are two broad classes of firearm:

- **Shoulder firearms** – eg rifles and shotguns
- **Handguns** – eg revolvers and pistols

Firearms may also be characterised by smoothbore and rifled weapons, the former is used in shotguns and the latter in most other firearms. Rifling in a gun barrel is a system of spiral grooves cut into the barrel that impart a twisting motion on the bullet as it leaves the barrel, resulting in a more stable trajectory. Muskets are another type of smoothbore (and sometimes partially rifled) firearm.

Firearms may be single shot, revolver, automatic or semiautomatic.

- **Single shot** – loaded manually, fired and unloaded manually.
- **Revolver** – has a rotating cylinder holding from 4 to 24 cartridges. Each time a cartridge is fired, the cylinder revolves by means of cocking the hammer or pulling the trigger, placing the cartridge into position to be fired.
- **Automatic** – generally found in military weapons. A repeating type. Cartridges are fired in succession as long as the trigger is pressed.
- **Semiautomatic** – similar to the automatic but fires only one shot each time the trigger is pulled.

PATHOLOGY:

PMI – post-mortem interval, an estimate of the time between the instant of death and discovery of the body.

Lividity – at death a person's blood ceases to circulate and changes from a bright red to purplish colour because it is no longer being oxygenated. The blood settles into dependent capillaries and eventually pools in certain areas of the body. These areas appear purplish due to the pooling of the blood.

Rigor mortis – resultant of a stiffening or contraction of the body muscles related to chemical changes occurring within the muscles after death. It usually begins two to four hours after death beginning in the jaw and neck. Complete rigor begins to disappear about 18 to 36 hours after death, and in the average body is completely gone within 48 to 60 hours.

Liver mortis – caused by the pooling and settling of blood within the blood vessels from the effect of gravity. It appears as a purple discoloration of the skin. The location of liver mortis is determined by the position of the body after death. If the body is lying face down, livor will develop on the front of the body rather than on the back.

Marbling – produced by hemolysis of blood vessels with reaction of haemoglobin and hydrogen sulphide and the development of red, purple or greenish black discoloration along the vessels.

Cadaveric spasm – under certain conditions the stiffening of the hands or arms may take place immediately at the time of death. This is known as cadaveric spasm and is often confused with rigor mortis. Cadaveric spasm remains until putrefaction. It is not uncommon for persons who had a firearm or a knife in their hand at the time of death to clutch it tightly in their hand after death.

Putrefaction – When death occurs, micro-organisms within the intestinal tract escape from the bowel into the other tissues of the body. As they grow, they begin to produce gases which can distort and discolour the tissues of the body. The gases are unable to escape and so the body begins to swell. The general signs of putrefaction are:

- greenish discoloration of abdomen and genitals
- veins in skin are blue or purplish due to pigment of decomposing blood (marbling)
- after the body fluid dries, a yellow parchment-like membrane forms
- after several days:
 - the abdomen swells and the body bloats (from the gas)
 - fluid is emitted from the mouth and nose (from the lungs and stomach)
 - the rectum may empty
 - the skin blisters similarly to peeling sunburn.



Expert contributions are gladly accepted - Please send your definitions to the Editor



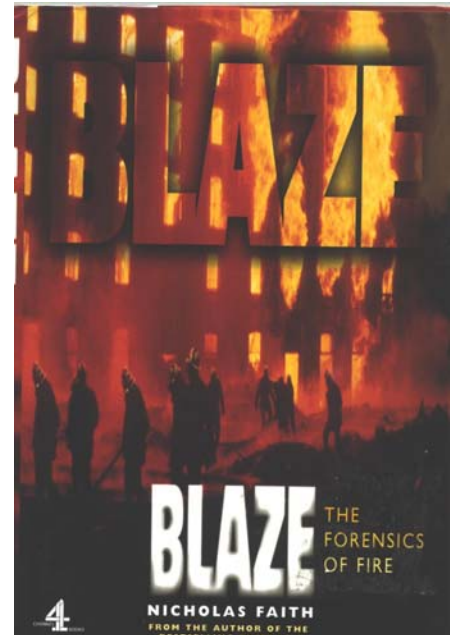
BOOK REVIEW by Aldo Severino

BLAZE - The Forensics of Fire by Nicholas Faith

Amongst the hoard of Chrissy presents I received among them a few books one of which was this read from the author Nicholas FAITH - Nicholas Faith details the work of fire investigators as they put together causes of fire, observe how fire spreads and smoke flows, and attempt to understand the behaviour of those victims caught in the blazing infernos. He brings to light the work of the fire investigators leading to convict arsonists or make a case of making buildings safer for all of us.

Review Quote: "The first book to apply the extraordinary art of forensic science to the ancient scourge of fire, BLAZE vividly illustrates how investigators, who were once reliant solely upon conjecture, combine today's sophisticated computer and video technology with advanced knowledge of fuel, aerodynamics, chemistry, and behavioral patterns to answer the questions of how fire starts, spreads, and what we can do to prevent it from happening again.

I found it to be a good and easy read, in the fact that I was not bogged down by overly abused 'technical terms', and, was able to grasp the technical accounts depicted by some of the 'fearsome infernos' de-



Newsletter by Email

If you would like to receive the newsletter by email, please send me an email indicating your name, membership number, and the recipient email address. shaheen.aumeer@uts.edu.au

Contact Details

If you have any query, comment or suggestion about this newsletter or any information contained within, please do not hesitate to contact us. *All correspondence regarding general enquiries, membership renewal, payment etc, can be addressed to:*

NSW Branch ANZFSS
PO Box 207
Lidcombe NSW 1825

Phone: 02 9514 1983
Fax: 02 9514 1460

Email: anzfss.nswsec@nifs.com.au
Editor: shaheen.aumeer@uts.edu.au

Specific recipients (eg. the President, Treasurer, Membership Officer, etc.) can be reached C/o the details above.

Website:
<http://www.anzfss.org.au>

Your Committee:

President:	Claude Roux
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	Aaron Heagney
	Eric Murray
	Sarah Robinson
	Meiya Sutisno
	James Wallman
	Ian White

Final Words:

"Time to use head for something other than target"
- Noriyuki "Pat" Morita as Mr Miyagi, *The Karate Kid, Part I* (1984)