Two major milestones for 2012

New ANZFSS Website launched

and

Six weeks to go to the 21st
International Symposium on the
Forensic Sciences
Dear ANZFSS Member,

Unless you have been hiding in a cave, you are well aware of the fact that forensic science has been in the firing line for some time. Our own Symposium in 2010 in Sydney focused on this topic with the theme 'Forensic Science on Trial'. While the crux of the discussions usually revolves around admissibility of evidence and interpretation of forensic evidence in court, we tend to overlook another challenging, and perhaps more important finding: a number of studies tend to show that forensic science is fundamentally inefficient at all stages of the criminal justice process. Indicators recently quoted by various (mostly overseas) researchers include:

- Only 5% of all matters examined in the laboratory end up as evidence in court;
- Forensic traces enable the identification of homicide perpetrators in only 1% of the cases;
- Only 7 DNA ‘matches’ out of 10 end up in court, and we don’t know how they influence judicial decisions; and
- For every 1,000 volume crimes, only 75 are solved, in only 37 cases is someone charged, and in only 15 is someone found guilty, leading to only 4 custodial sentences.

These figures appear as ‘inconvenient truths’ to most of us who genuinely believe that we contribute significantly to the criminal justice system. The discrepancy may come from the fact that such studies anchor forensic science in the broad policing and security space, with crime reduction, crime prevention and reduction of fear of crime as objectives, as opposed to the narrower court end-use of forensic science. As a result, before rejecting forensic science as being globally inefficient, we ought to ask the question: do we use it to its full potential? Shouldn’t we develop holistic models to provide a strategy to integrate technologies, and to help scientists develop their potential to engage in a more significant way in policing, crime investigation, and associated disciplines such as criminology, instead of further compartmentalizing the various forensic fields? Developing and fostering a strong forensic science culture is also crucial. And this has implications for education, training and R&D. There is no doubt that this debate will continue, and the ANZFSS, if it is to be a true professional society, can, and should play a leading role in these developments.

The Hobart Symposium on 23-27 September will be the first opportunity to obtain a significant snapshot of these topics, along with other R&D findings and general information sharing. Gerard Dutton and his team, with the assistance of many members of the Australian and New Zealand forensic science community, are set to deliver what should be a momentous event. The scientific and social programs, along with the traditional workshops and exhibition have been finalized. Sponsorship and exhibition targets have been exceeded. Almost 700 delegates have registered at the time of writing. I can only emphasise the crucial importance of the strong attendance by Members at the Symposium, both for scientific and financial reasons. For this reason, the National Executive offered 31 scholarships across the country this year in the form of a free registration to the Symposium. The State and Territory Branches have also awarded their own scholarships. Details of the scholarship are published on page 4 of this Newsletter. If you haven’t registered there is still time; please visit http://www.anzfss2012.com.au/ for more information.

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A sound communication strategy is an important part of our agenda to move towards a more professional Society. As a result I am very pleased to announce the following:

A new ANZFSS website has been launched. Please visit http://www.anzfss.org.au regularly and don’t hesitate to send your feedback.

The ANZFSS have recognised the Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences as its official journal following and invitation from the Australian Academy of Forensic Sciences. The journal is published by Taylor and Francis and edited by Professor James Robertson our National Vice President. The adoption of the AJFS menas there will be a single voice for the forensic sciences in Australia and New Zealand.

I take this opportunity to welcome new Branch Executive Committees in Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia. I congratulate and thank Anna Kmon, Jacqui Wilson and Hadyn Green, new State Presidents, and their respective teams for volunteering and taking up these important roles. I sincerely thank the outgoing Presidents, Andy Telfer, Donna McGregor and Kari Pitts, along with their colleagues, for their significant contributions to the Society.

I have now visited all Branches of the Society in Australia and New Zealand. Once again, thank you to everyone for the warm welcome. I hope my visits answered many questions members may have had about the future directions that the Society might take. On that note, an update on the governance and policy review currently underway, will be given in at the next National AGM in Hobart in September, together with the presentation of a minor revision of the rules. More details will be forwarded in the near future.

Do not forget to visit our merchandise page http://www.anzfss.org.au/merchandise.htm as it provides great ideas for gifts. It also helps promote the Society and also to assist the local branches in raising money for functions and awards. As a special offer, there is currently a ‘run-out’ of old stock. Details of this limited offer can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

And of course, if you are not a member of the ANZFSS, please contact your Branch to obtain a membership form! (contact details from http://www.anzfss.org.au)

Finally, it is with great sadness that many of you heard that Cora-Ann Kobus, Prof. Hilton Kobus’s wife, passed away on 13 May 2012. The funeral took place on 15 May 2012, with many friends and colleagues from the forensic science community present. Hilton is well-known and well-respected in the forensic science community, as well as a past-President of our Society. ‘As they say’, behind every successful person there is usually a loyal and supportive partner. On behalf of the ANZFSS, I extend my condolences to Hilton and his family and remind them that the whole Australasian forensic science community is thinking of them.

Prof. Claude Roux
President, ANZFSS

Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada
July 30, 1964
Dear Mr. Fuller:

I was struck (lightly) the other day by the following wonder: if lawyers become disbarred, and priests unfrocked, how might people in other paths of life be read out of their profession or calling?

It occurred to me then that electricians get delighted, and musicians possibly denoted. If these assumptions are correct, surely it follows that cowboys must be deranged, that models are deposed, and judges are obviously distorted. A medium who loses her license is dispirited, and it seems only poetic justice that a Far Eastener who is banished is disoriented.

I could go on and on, but I don't want to overload the mail handlers. An office worker who can't cope may, alas, become defiled.

Yours sincerely, Marian Forer
National and Branch Scholarship winners

Congratulations to the following members who have been awarded travel scholarships to attend the 21st International Symposium on the Forensic Sciences:

National
Jodie Green-ACT
Kate Grimwood-NSW
Melanie Holt-NSW
Ian Calahem-NZ
John Turner-NZ
Duncan McCarthy-QLD
Sheree Hughes-Stamm-QLD
Troy O’Malley-QLD
Carolyne Bird-SA
Darren Bails-SA
David Eitzen-SA
Jennifer Templeton-SA
Natasha Mitchell-SA
Sherryn Ciavaglia-SA
Ted Silenieks-SA
Emily Sowter-TAS
Greg Dicinoski-TAS
Jim Pearson-VIC
Lisa Johns-VIC
Lynn Forrest-VIC
Joanne Gerstner-Stevens - Vic
Michael Wood-NSW
Natasha Stojanovska-NSW
Elizabeth McKenzie-NZ
Nicola Beckett-QLD
Denice Higgins-SA
Janette Edson-SA
Jessirie Dilag-SA
John Berketa-SA
Katherine Cashman-TAS
Wei-Feng Hung-WA

NSW
Melanie Meredith
Kate Grimwood
Susan Long
Rebecca Johnson
Mike Wood

Queensland
Lyza-Jane McMenzy
Alanna Speirs
Julianne Farrell
Marijke (Leah) Tigchelaar
Nicolene Lottering

South Australia
Carolyne Bird
Ted Silenieks
David Eitzen
Sherryn Ciavaglia
Natasha Mitchell
Jennifer Templeton
Thekla Ganiaris
John Berketa
Jessire Dilag
Denice Higgins

Victoria
Jenni Scott
Runa Danial
Tim Bate
Katherine (Kitty) Kulman
Lisa Johns
Joanne Gerstner-Stevens

Western Australia
Anna Bradley
Natasha Kreitals
Neil Blaver
Belinda Evans
Wei-Feng Hung
Jonathan Thabano

New Zealand
David Scott
Ian Calhaem
John Turner

ACT
Jo Lee

Tasmania
John North
The ANZFSS Symposium is now only about two months away! The Organising Committee along with our Conference Manager continue to strive behind the scenes to provide a world class forensic symposium.

The main news is that the full oral and poster program is now on the website with hyperlinks to all the 500+ abstracts. Although some minor tweaking to the program will need to continue, even now you can plan your week and assess the talks you wish to attend by reading the abstracts. We have taken pains to ensure all individual session times within the program start and finish together and with all the rooms at the symposium venue quite close to each other, should ensure an easy and rapid change if you wish to attend a presentation in a different discipline within the same session. As far as possible, we have also tried to avoid scheduling together our 18 main forensic disciplines with overlapping aspects so depending on your interests, we hope you don't miss out on too much. That's always a challenge with 7 rooms operating concurrently, all with great presentations on offer!

We have also ensured that all the Posters will be hung for the duration of the symposium and different times will be scheduled for authors to stand by their posters during morning and afternoon teas in the event you wish to discuss or query their work.

Here's some statistics so far. We will have:
- 11 high profile and respected national and international Plenary Speakers;
- 56 Keynote Discipline presentations from a wide range of subject matter experts;
- 230+ other oral presentations in all forensic disciplines;
- 200+ poster presentations in all forensic disciplines
- 17 workshops before and after the symposium.

Our Exhibition space is now all but sold out and the latest in technology and equipment will be available to view. So far we have well over 600 delegates registered from 29 countries.

A total of 21 Full and 10 Student scholarships have been awarded by the National Branch of ANZFSS with another 13 Full and 4 Student scholarships awarded by the State (and NZ) Branches. Congratulations to all those winners.

The Governor of Tasmania, His Excellency the Honourable Peter Underwood (formerly a Justice and Chief Justice of the Tasmanian Supreme Court) has been confirmed to open the symposium.

Our social program is also well advanced and there will be a number of extra curricular activities every evening to participate in; check the website www.anzfss2012.com.au

The 21st ANZFSS International Symposium is shaping up to be a fantastic event. On behalf of the Organising Committee and the Tasmanian Branch of ANZFSS, we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Hobart in September for what will be a brilliant time!

Sergeant Gerard Dutton (Symposium Chairman - ANZFSS 2012)
Who's who in the National Council

Greg Dicinoski—President—Tasmanian Branch:


A/Prof Dicinoski then moved to the University of South Africa (1997-1998) and then to the University of Tasmania in 1999. He is currently the Head of the School of Chemistry and the Deputy Director of the Australian Centre for Research on Separation Science. A/Prof Dicinoski leads projects relating to counter-terrorism and pharmaceutical analysis. Specific focus is given to theoretical aspects, including the modelling and optimisation of retention in chromatographic systems and mobility simulation in electrophoresis, and specialist applications for the separation of target chemical species using reversed-phase and ion chromatography, and capillary electrophoresis. His research is funded by the ARC and Federal Government and has resulted in over 30 peer-review publications and 80 conference presentations.

A/Prof Dicinoski has supervised 20 honours, masters and doctorate students, and is a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of Innovation in Science and Mathematics and an associate director of the Californian Separation Science Society (CASSS).

Hadyn Green—President—Western Australian Branch

Hadyn is the owner of Forensic Evidence Review (Australia) and Adjunct Associate Professor at The University of Western Australia where he teaches the post graduate unit Forensic Science and Policing. He is writing a text book on forensic science matters.

After 39 years of service to Western Australia Police and retiring at the rank of superintendent in charge of the Forensic Division, Hadyn became a consultant investigator at the Office of Police Integrity in Victoria investigating alleged police misconduct. As a police officer he worked in general policing, traffic enforcement, legal advising, legislative reform, investigations, and policy development.

For his efforts in forensic science and disaster victim identification, Hadyn was awarded the Australian Police Medal in the Australia Day Honours List. He has also been awarded the National Service Medal, the Western Australia Police Medal, and the Overseas Service Medal.

Hadyn holds a Graduate Diploma in Forensic Science, a Graduate Diploma in Leadership, an Executive Certificate in Management, a Diploma in Policing, and a Certificate in Legal Studies. He is about to commence a masters degree research project studying the variables applicable to use of ground penetrating radar in Western Australia.
Matt Gittos—President—New Zealand Branch

Matt is a Fingerprint Officer the Auckland Fingerprint Section of the New Zealand Police and comes to the executive from the practitioner body of the society.

Born and raised in Tauranga, NZ and educated at Tauranga Boys' College, Matt then attended Massey University to gain his Bachelor of Science Degree majoring in Biochemistry and Microbiology. He then entered the work force working for an International chemical company supplying specialist products to the Pulp and Paper industry before heading off to the UK on OE. Whilst in the UK Matt was employed as a contractor working in the City of London Police Fingerprint Bureau Laboratory as a Fingerprint technician. Once 'infected' with the fingerprints 'bug' he returned to NZ to train as a fingerprint expert.

He worked for a year in Wellington at the National Fingerprint Section (criminal registration and NZ Fingerprint Collection/ Database) before a trainee Fingerprint Officer position became available in a Crime-print section. Matt has been at the Auckland Fingerprint Section since 2004, qualifying as an expert in 2009.

He has been a member of ANZFSS since 2005. Matt was previously the Secretary of the New Zealand Forensic Science Society and prior to this was a member of the NZFSS committee. Matt is also a Fellow of the Fingerprint Society. In 2010 he received an ANZFSS Travel Award from ANZFSS Executive to attend the Sydney Symposium as a oral presenter. Matt has assisted a number of MSc students with fingerprint related aspects of their studies.

Outside of work Matt and his partner Sarah, enjoy DIY projects and landscape gardening at their Mt Albert home.
Dear Colleague

As forensic scientists, we seek to provide the highest quality and help the justice system to the best of our abilities. We use the most updated techniques for analyses and adhere to well developed quality schemes (e.g., ISO). As an end result, usually as a last step in the process, any findings need to be evaluated.

But how do forensic scientists assess their results? We now know, from proficiency testing data and real cases, that even in the field of forensic DNA (where guidelines are published in peer reviewed journals) the reported value of evidence can sometimes span over a very large range, including extremely strong support as well as exclusions. This may mean that, depending on the expert, the Court would be told two strongly diverging opinions. This raises the legitimate question: "How do forensic practitioners assess and report the results of their examinations?"

Interestingly, the EU, NAS and ENFSI (through for example the development and implementation of an ENFSI standard for reporting evaluative forensic findings) have recognized interpretation as a high priority topic. Yet, practitioners currently still face the challenge of how they can further their interpretative skills, and work towards implementing a harmonized evaluative framework.

In collaboration with Dr. Evett and Prof. Aitken - both recognized pioneers in forensic interpretation - our university has designed novel online courses that are tailored for forensic caseworkers. These courses:

* seek to offer detailed coverage of interpretation issues such as foundational principles and methodology (including elements of forensic statistics) for the evaluation of forensic data in a way that is tailored to meet the particular needs of the criminal justice system;
* aim to offer educational opportunities that allow practitioners to acquire knowledge and competence in the most up to date approaches in the evaluation and interpretation of forensic findings;
* cover, among other aspects, probabilistic reasoning (including Bayesian networks and other methods of forensic statistics, tools and software), skills in the oral and written communication of uncertainty, and the development of independence and self-confidence to solve practical inference problems.

E-learning is chosen as a general format in order to build a trans-institutional online-community of practitioners from varying forensic disciplines and workfield experience such as reporting officers, (chief) scientists, coordinators, but also lawyers who all can interact directly from their personal workplaces without consideration of distances, travel expenses or time schedules.

Participants for these courses need no prerequisite other than involvement in casework and being concerned by interpretation issues.

The courses will begin in September and registration should be done as early as possible (set deadline: 15th of July 2012). (Editors note: Although the deadline has passed this letter has been included in this newsletter to highlight this course—if you are interested there will be further courses)

Please find more detailed information on these courses here:
http://www.formation-continue-unil-epfl.ch/en/forensicbn

For demonstration pages of the course, please go to and log on as a guest.
http://moodle.unil.ch/course/view.php?id=1099

We hope that you will agree that sound interpretation of scientific findings is a good investment for the future of your institution, forensic science and the justice system in general. Please do not hesitate to forward this email to whom you think might be interested and contact us, should you have any question or request.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards
Prof. Taroni, Prof. Champod, Dr Biedermann and Dr Hicks

University of Lausanne
Faculty of Law and Criminal Justice
Forensic Science Conferences of Interest

25th World Congress of the International Society for Forensic Genetics (ISFG)

The International Society for Forensic Genetics will hold their biennial meeting 2-7 September 2013 in Melbourne, Australia.

The International Society for Forensic Genetics (ISFG) is a renowned international association promoting scientific knowledge in the field of genetic markers analysed for forensic purposes. The ISFG was founded in 1968 and represents more than 1100 members from over 60 countries. For the first time in its history, the Congress would be held in South East Asia or Australasia.

The Congress will provide an excellent opportunity to showcase the work of Australia and New Zealand laboratories. The Congress will incorporate two full days of a variety of workshops, three full congress days highlighting a world class scientific program and not to mention an exciting social program.
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