



Honour the past and look to the future

Recipients of the Pharmacy Practice Medals of Excellence were honoured at the recent Governors' Dinner
By Hailey Settineri

The Pharmacy Practice Foundation (PPF) Governors' Dinner was held at Sydney University's Great Hall last month, presenting Victorian pharmacist and former Guild (Victoria) president Bill Scott, Brisbane pharmacist James Delahunty, and managing partner, Johnston Rorke accountants, pharmacy services division's Bruce Annabel with medals of excellence.

Mr Scott was awarded the Merck Sharp & Dohme (Australia) Medal of Excellence in Pharmacy Practice for his valuable, high-level contribution to pharmacy practice in his position of Victorian resident of the PGA between 1996 and 2005. During this time Mr Scott held the important positions of national vice-president and chair of the health economics committee and led the Guild team that successfully negotiated the multi-billion dollar Third and Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreements with the Commonwealth Government.

"Bill Scott has advocated by his leadership the manner in which the pharmacy profession needed to adapt to the changes in health environment," PPF president, Warwick Plunkett, said.

Fourth generation pharmacist, Mr Delahunty, received the sanofi aventis Medal of Excellence in Pharmacy Practice for putting professional ideas into practice. The first of several groundbreaking moves came when Mr Delahunty and his partners at T&G Day & Night Pharmacy established the world's first photographic mini-lab in a retail environment in 1979.

Since then there have been other enterprises from Max

Crofts Chemist (1989), which became Delahunty's City Day & Night in 1995, to MacArthur Central Chemist in Brisbane's newest \$100 million shopping centre.

Delahunty's Cost-Less Chemists in Brunswick Street opened in 1979 and is now the well-established 'Chemist Australia' online retailer.

Mr Delahunty's company has also been involved with World of Perfume Shops, Cost-Less Health Foods, and the manufacture and packing of a diverse range of products including Gentlees Towelettes,

Strychnine for vermin and Delamac mapping systems.

Mr Annabel was awarded with the Pharmacy Practice Foundation Medal of Excellence (Industry) for his commitment to pharmacy as seen through his speeches at industry conferences, seminars, workshops and columns.

Mr Annabel has gained an understanding of pharmacy issues through his work with Johnston Rorke Chartered Accountants, however he said his interest in health was spawned earlier in life.

"The reason why the pharmacy concept attracted me and allowed me this opportunity was because of my parents," he said. "My mother was a hospital matron for many years and my father was a country newspaper editor. That means he was a stirrer – I seem to have inherited a couple of those traits.

"My passion is trying to bring quality business practices and health care within a retail environment," Mr Annabel said.

Former secretary of the Department of Health and Ageing (at the time of writing),

Jane Halton, spoke at the dinner about the future of pharmacy in Australia, with particular focus on e-health.

"E-health is the big thing coming towards us which we need to think about," she said. "And that's all of us – administrators, professionals, front line healthcare staff. The new technologies coming have huge potential that may potentially mean that we have to rethink our business model and our professional offers."

"At its core, electronic health is going to mean that there will be,

inevitably, an electronic record of every single Australian who wants one. Ultimately, a smart consumer is going to have an electronic health record. They're going to have their details stored so they don't have to repeat every detail, illness, injury, hospital visit, medical professional they ever see."

Ms Halton said e-health offers more than improved customer service.

"It's an important tool in terms of safety, reliability and prescription errors. It's also got a huge potential as a time saver, saver of waste, reducer of risk and a capacity to actually spot individual issues and wider effects.

So for example, we know that there are 150,000 medical misadventures in Australia every year. Electronic health has potential to reduce that number close to zero."

Ms Halton also dismissed speculation that community pharmacy would become redundant in an electronic world.

"What those analyses fail to remember is that people like someone to talk to ... but they want to ask those extra couple of questions that they didn't think

of when they were in the doctor's surgery.

"So my view is that the advent of the e-pharmacy has been much overstated by the academics and in particular those results. But we do need to think very carefully about what electronic health means in both

a business and in a professional model."

Ms Halton said e-health will enable pharmacy assistants and pharmacists to follow up more regularly and provide better lifestyle interventions.

"The challenge will be to marry this electronic world vision and the opportunity it presents with a reasonable business model that enables you to pay the rent, pay the staff, and may I suggest turn around some profit," she said.

"The reality is, the pharmacists are a crucial part of the delivery system, and the shift that pharmacy will need to make is not one that is outside the health profession, in fact it is one that is more connected up on a daily basis with online health professionals, because that is what electronic health is going to require us to do – be more visible, accountable and connected to others in the health profession."

Ms Halton said no matter the impact of e-health, we will always have pharmacies and pharmacists.

"What we don't know yet is what exactly this professional practice in this new world will look like. I'm absolutely confident that the health system that we look at will not only be more effective, safer, and more efficient, but also, will be professionally rewarding, both for you and all the rest of us," she said. "And most importantly we'll be giving patients and customers what they want."



PPF Industry Medal of Excellence ... Bruce Annabel.



MSD Medal of Excellence ... Bill Scott.



Former Department of Health and Ageing secretary, Jane Halton.

“New technologies potentially mean that we have to rethink our business model.”

“E-health is the big thing coming towards us which we need to think about.”



L-R: Warwick Plunkett, James Delahunty, Jane Halton