

Director's Canada trip

As mentioned in her Director's column in this issue, Penny Allbon was invited to Canada at the end of January as guest speaker at a Health Information Summit, called 'Build once, use often: harnessing the full power of the EHR (Electronic Health Record)'. Penny was the guest of our sister organisation in Canada, the Canadian Institute of Health Information, which arranged the Canadian Summit in conjunction with Canada's electronic health enabling organisation, Canada Health Infoway.

Dr Allbon said the Summit was a very useful opportunity to understand more about how Canada and the UK were approaching the statistical use of electronic health records, and gave her some good insights into issues that will help us navigate our way into this new world. Summit participants were also very happy with the insights she provided from Australia.

Unfortunately for Dr Allbon, although the Summit was at the Kananaskis Resort in the Rockies in the middle of winter, she didn't have a chance to do any skiing...but she did come home with some photos and a dose of the flu. ■



Thinking globally update

Diabetes: Australian Facts goes international

Hot on the tail of the release of the National Centre for Monitoring Diabetes' flagship publication, *Diabetes: Australian facts 2008*, Lynelle Moon, Indrani Pieris-Caldwell and Mardi Templeton presented results from the report at the International Diabetes Federation Western Pacific Congress in Wellington, New Zealand (30 March–2 April). The three oral presentations made at the Congress were:

- Complications of diabetes and their effect on people with diabetes in Australia
- Diabetes prevalence, hospitalisations and deaths in different population groups of Australia, and
- Gestational diabetes mellitus estimates: what is the current picture in Australia?

All three presentations were well received. Prevention of diabetes through risk factor control, the long-term complications of the condition and the impact of diabetes within different population groups were strong themes arising throughout the four-day conference. ■



Lynelle Moon and Indrani Pieris-Caldwell

Photo © Irene Dowdy

An Australian in Paris

Michael de Looper joined the AIHW way back in May 1988, soon after its establishment. He began in the Health Labour Force Unit, had a brief stint in the Nutrition Unit (when there was one), and also worked in the Executive Unit. But most of his time at the AIHW has been in various permutations of the Population Health Unit.

For many years Michael has been the Australian data 'correspondent' for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), headquartered in Paris. His contact with OECD led him to be offered a two-year position in the Health Division at the OECD's headquarters commencing in September 2007. The AIHW was pleased to grant Michael leave to accept the position.

Michael assists in maintaining and developing the large OECD Health Database, with special responsibility for the sections on mortality, morbidity and health determinants. A current focal area of work is the development of new indicators for monitoring chronic diseases, children's health and mental health. Michael is also examining the feasibility of including cross-national indicators of health

inequality. The work requires good knowledge of national and cross-national health data and surveys, and the policy settings in which these are used.

He finds work and life in Paris both varied and challenging. Michael continues to stay in touch with his colleagues at the AIHW.

You can read more about OECD here: www.oecd.org ■



Michael de Looper and family