

## **AAG WA November 2009 Newsletter**

As usual, WA AAG members are busy within the state, promoting issues relevant to ageing and older people. This newsletter features the background and work being done by Hilary O'Connell, committee member.

Hilary qualified in the United Kingdom as an Occupational Therapist. Her career in the UK included working as both a clinician and manager of a large Community Occupational Therapy service. The focus of the service, along with assessment and problem solving, included recommendations for assistive devices and environmental adaptations that would support an optimal level of independence. During this period Hilary was also involved in the development of a re-enablement programme for clients with physical and or/learning disabilities.

Since emigrating to WA in 1997, Hilary has worked in a number of community positions including in an ACAT team and with Silver Chain WA. During her time with Silver Chain, Hilary was instrumental in the development and implementation of the Home Independence Program (HIP) and the developmental phase of a person centred care model for clients with dementia.

Hilary has been with CommunityWest Inc since 2006 and is currently managing, in partnership with the Western Australian HACC program, the development and implementation across the state of the Wellness Approach to Community HomeCare. The objective of the Wellness Approach is to facilitate a reorientation from a predominantly dependency based service model towards a wellness service model across the WA HACC sector. Hilary will be presenting a paper on this topic at the Bunbury Population Health Forum in December titled 'Wellness Approach to Community HomeCare'.

## **Activities held since August 2009**

This year the AAG are partnering with Geriaction to provide a series of symposia; since the last newsletter was submitted, in early, August, we have held one. This symposium was on nutrition and was called 'Nutrition: Eating For Improved Health In Older People', held on Tuesday 22 September at the Technology Park Function Centre in Bentley.

Sessions were as follows:

1. Associate Professor Alexandra McManus, Director of the Centre of Excellence for Science, Seafood and Health, Curtin University.

*What are the health benefits of seafood for seniors?*

2. Pamela Dawe, Accredited Practising Dietitian, Nutrition Consultant

*Easy, edible and cost efficient diet solutions in aged care*

3. Associate Professor Alexandra McManus, Director of the Centre of Excellence for Science, Seafood and Health, Curtin University.

*Review of GP and Allied Health Professional Nutritional Resources*

The symposium was well received.

### **Special Guest Speaker**

A joint presentation was also held on August 25<sup>th</sup> at Curtin University of Technology. This time, AAG (WA) partnered with the WA Dementia Training Study Centre.

The speaker was Thomas Fischer, who was visiting from Berlin – Charité, Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Institute of Medical Sociology, Division of Health Services Research in Nursing.

Thomas has a PhD in Nursing Science and research interests in pain in older persons and care for people who have dementia. Close to 200 people attended this presentation.

Thomas spoke about a range of issues related to pain, its assessment, and its management, drawing on relevant research evidence as appropriate. Specific issues covered included:

- Methods of pain assessment for people with mild to moderate dementia
- Pain assessment for people with severe dementia
- Common pain behaviours (including facial expressions and their significance when assessing pain)
- Clinical practice guidelines for pain management

The full presentation can be accessed via the WA Dementia Training Study centre website at [http://cra.curtin.edu.au/wadtsc/wadtsc\\_networkingseries.html](http://cra.curtin.edu.au/wadtsc/wadtsc_networkingseries.html)