



Editorial



ANNA Celebrating Fifty Years

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DOI: 10.21307/ajon-2024-001a

The On the 4th of May, Tonnie Koenen organised the first meeting of Australasian Neuroscience Nurses Association (ANNA) in Canberra, during the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia's annual meeting. Thirty nurses attended this inaugural meeting and ANNA came into existence. From this initial meeting we have grown in strength and so many changes have taken place. We have lost many dear friends and colleagues, but we have also made many new friends. We have seen technology and practices come and go, and through our annual meetings and AJoN publications we have embraced new technologies and practices. The sharing of knowledge and skills has been integral to the growth and development of ANNA. As an organisation we continue to promote nursing education and raise the overall quality of patient care while strengthening the position and professional recognition of neuroscience nursing. We have also developed into an organisation with deeper insights into the health care system and have remained abreast of the historical and political developments related to the provision of healthcare.

I believe that the culture of ANNA has been a key factor when it comes to knowledge sharing. As nurses we naturally seek and use knowledge as part of our daily work. Taking this to the next step of sharing and disseminating this knowledge is a daunting process for many but through our conferences, online learning platforms and the AJoN we have strived to value diversity in both skills and experience as well as the range in areas of practice within the neuroscience field. We see nurses returning again and again to present or publish their works, encouraged through the feedback and recognition of their peers. It has been amazing to see nurses grow and develop from first time presenters and publishers, where they started perhaps with a case study of interest, to a high level of expertise where they are disseminating their own research and even results from higher degrees.

Technology has been a game changer, not only in our daily practice but also in the dissemination of information. It is amazing what has changed over these last 50 years from printed documents, overhead projectors and slides to PowerPoint, Teams, email, social media, Zoom and the internet. These changes have enabled us to foster communication and collaboration and to facilitate knowledge sharing. No more evidence of this was during the Covid-19 pandemic when we moved our conferences online. Despite the extra workloads and increased physical and emotional burden of care during the pandemic, ANNA continued to serve its members with online materials, the AJoN and the annual conference presented in a virtual format.

I have only been a part of this ANNA journey for the last 15 years; I first joined and attended the 2010 meeting in Auckland. I am still unsure as to why I stayed for the AGM but from there somehow, I spoke to the late Sharryn Byers and became the conference convenor; what a steep learning curve that was. I thought maybe I would do it for a year but ended up staying for six. Sharryn's leadership and support was incredible during this time, and I believe we were successful as a team because of the trust and relationships instilled in the executive. I was able to share my knowledge and skills without the fear of being judged and this encouraged both positive interactions and an environment for me to learn my new role through knowledge sharing, feedback, and the generation of new ideas through experience.

In 2014 I represented ANNA at the 1st International Neuroscience Nursing Update in Jakarta. This was an amazing opportunity and I have made many lifelong friends. As well as participating in many aspects of the conference and celebrations for the opening of the new Jakarta Brain Hospital, I was also able to meet with nursing leaders and experts. This provided a unique opportunity to begin to understand both the challenges and the incredible developments made in neuroscience nursing in Indonesia. I was able to publish this work in the AJoN with my very trusted and respected colleague, and friend, Enny Mulyatsih. Our paper explored the current nursing and healthcare system in Indonesia and the challenges and leadership required by Indonesian nurses as they strive towards the recognition of neuroscience nursing as a specialty.

In 2016 I was offered the role of Editor of the AJoN and saw the transition of the journal from a paper-based publication to an online indexed journal. My journey and this transition would not have been possible without the groundwork and mentoring by Vicki Evans. Through this partnership the journal has grown to become a high-quality competitive journal with an international identity. ANNA has developed a strong and successful mentoring program that successfully supports nurses both starting their neuroscience nursing career as well as those wishing to advance in the profession. We all know that textbooks and the internet can only take us so far and whether engaged in formal or informal mentoring, there are tremendous benefits. Mentoring in my ANNA experience has been more than succession planning, it has enabled me to undertake self-development as well as improving my knowledge and skills.

In 2019 I branched out and was successful in being elected as Vice-President of the World Federation of Neuroscience Nurses (WFNN). Australian has a long history of representation including Tonnie Koenen, Valda Jones, Barbara Lester, Rochelle Firth and Vicki Evans. It was in 1977 that ANNA was formally accepted as a member of WFNN, with this collaboration continuing until today. WFNN promotes interactions and the sharing and growth of nursing knowledge. The dissemination of information on an international level is crucial as we again, in this post pandemic era, become a mobile workforce whilst at the same time assessing the challenges we faced during the pandemic and the lessons we learnt. Unfortunately, Darwin 2021 was postponed due to the pandemic, but plans are well

ahead in planning the WFNN Congress in Darwin during 2025 and we look forward to seeing everyone there.

It is hard to believe that ten years have passed since we celebrated forty years of the Association. I fondly remember our conference and celebrations in 2014, including the post conference celebration, complete with potato crisps served in a cooking pot. This year we again return to Canberra to

celebrate an incredible fifty years. I look forward to catching up with old friends, remembering past friends and making new friends.

Linda





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