



AMWA e-news October 2009

Greetings!

AMWA 26th annual conference

Early bird registration for the conference ends on 6 October 2009 so register now to get the reduced rate. Register through the AMWA website (www.medicalwriters.org).

Attendees at this year's conference will find plenty to reward them. We have top-notch speakers with topical ideas to entertain and stimulate; talk and networking with old colleagues and new friends, particularly at the dinner; and high-value, low-cost workshops for your professional development.

The conference has a full and exciting program with speakers such as the eminent Professor Warwick Anderson, chief executive officer, National Health and Medical Research Council, Professor Dominic Dwyer, medical virologist, Westmead Hospital, and Melissa Sweet, freelance health journalist and Adjunct Senior Lecturer, School of Public Health, University of Sydney.

For the dinner, we are returning to the Women's College, because we liked it so much in 2006. Our after-dinner speaker on Friday 16th is Dr Mark Ragg, adjunct senior lecturer in the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney and principal of RaggAhmed. Mark will be 'in conversation' with Sophie Scott, ABC National Medical Reporter. You can find a little more about Mark and the insights he will share with us at the dinner below.

Be warned that this year the conference coincides with the Masters Games, so book your hotel early. The closest hotels are Rydges, Camperdown, and Quest, Camperdown. A short bus ride away (in order of distance) are the Vulcan Hotel, Pompei Bed and Breakfast, the Leisure Inn, Aarons Hotel and the Aspire Hotel.

Annual General Meeting at the conference

If you are a current AMWA member, don't forget to join us at the Annual General Meeting on Friday at 4.30pm to elect the AMWA office bearers. If you feel you could contribute to the development of AMWA this is also a great opportunity to nominate yourself for a position on the committee.

The nomination forms can be obtained from the AMWA website, www.medicalwriters.org. Nomination forms should be sent to the [conference organiser](#) 7 days before the AGM.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Conference dinner speaker

Dr Mark Ragg



Mark Ragg, MBBS, BA, trained as a medical practitioner, but has worked as a writer and editor for 20 years. He has been a reporter and health editor at *The Australian*, a contributor to *The Bulletin* and a senior writer and editorial writer at the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He has written 14 books on health matters, including the NHMRC's *How to present the evidence for consumers: preparation of consumer publications* (1999) and *How to put the evidence into practice: implementation and dissemination strategies* (2000). His

novel *The Dickinson Papers* was published by Random House in August 2006. He also teaches writing and public health.

Mark is adjunct senior lecturer in the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney and is a principal of RaggAhmed.

Conference speaker in profile

Melissa Sweet



Melissa Sweet has been writing about health and medical issues since the late 1980s, and has been freelancing for the past decade. Her work appears in a wide range of general and specialist publications. She also coordinates health coverage for *Crikey's* daily bulletin and moderates *Crikey's* health blog, *Croakey* (<http://blogs.crikey.com.au/croakey/>).

She is a founding member of the Foundation for Public Interest Journalism, which was recently established at the Institute for Social Research at Swinburne University in Melbourne (<http://www.sisr.net/cac/projects/journalismfoundation.htm>). She has honorary appointments in the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney, and in the Medical School of Notre Dame University (Sydney campus).

Together with Ray Moynihan, Melissa is the author of *Ten Questions You Must Ask Your Doctor* (Allen & Unwin, 2008), which encourages people to be more questioning about health care and health advice.

She also recently published a non-fiction book, *The Big Fat Conspiracy: How to Protect Your Family's Health* (ABC Books, 2007), which gives families and communities some strategies for healthy living and preventing weight gain. This book is now freely available for educational purposes from Melissa's website (www.sweetcommunication.com.au).

Her book, *Inside Madness* (Pan Macmillan, 2006), examined the history of mental health care in Australia, and the work and life of murdered psychiatrist Dr Margaret Tobin. In recognition of her work on this book, Melissa was awarded a Dart Centre Ochberg Fellowship.

Melissa is also co-author, with Professor Les Irwig, Judy Irwig, and Dr Lyndal Trevena, of a book which aims to give readers some tools for critically assessing health information. *Smart Health Choices: Making Sense of Health Advice* (Hammersmith Press, 2008) was recently released in the UK and Australia. The first edition, released in Australia by Allen and Unwin in 1999, has been updated by Dr Trevena.

Melissa has a particular interest in public health, mental health, rural health, media coverage of health, Indigenous health, consumer participation in decision-making, evidence-based care, health policy, and quality and safety issues.

Conference sponsor in profile



Platinum sponsor: Nuts for Life

Nuts for Life is a health education initiative established by the Australian tree nut industry to raise awareness of the nutrition and health benefits of regular tree nut consumption. Tree nuts include almonds, brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts. Nuts for Life aims to provide useful, accurate and up-to-date information, and the team is committed to circulating information based on sound science. This program is funded by voluntary contributions from the nut industry and by Australian government matched funding through Horticulture Australia. To receive the email newsletter *NutENews* go to www.nutsforlife.com.au or email Lisa Yates program manager and dietitian (and member of AMWA) at admin@nutsforlife.com.au

Getting to know one another

Belinda Butcher, Medical Communications Manager

Belinda is the Medical Communications Manager at Janssen-Cilag Pty Ltd, and also a contract Research Fellow for the George Institute for International Health. Before entering the world of Pharmaceuticals, Belinda didn't even know that medical writers existed.



Following completion of her PhD in pharmacology from the University of New South Wales, Belinda headed down the academic track, albeit briefly, as an associate lecturer at UNSW. She then moved from academia to industry, starting as a clinical research associate at Janssen-Cilag. Having had several roles within Janssen, moving between early and late phase research, she was finally lured to become a medical writer in 2005. It was like falling on her feet – ethical communication of science and medicine had always been of great interest.

Belinda is now broadening her skills, having just completed a Masters in Biostatistics. Her biggest challenge now is an internal one – getting the biostatistician inside to be able to communicate effectively!

Belinda joined AMWA in 2006 to help keep connected within the Australian Medical Writer community. She is also an active member of ARCS and EMWA.

What's new?

- The Association of Clinical and Regulatory Scientists (ARCS) continually holds development training sessions. Career Options in Biopharma is to be held on Oct 13th at 5.15pm - 7.15pm in the Bio21 Auditorium, Parkville, Vic. If you are interested in a move to the pharmaceutical industry, this may be for you. To find out about this and more see the ARCS website [here](#)
- The National Prescribing Service is holding its 2009 Annual General Meeting and Member Planning Day in Sydney on 20 November 2009. To find out more, see the website [here](#)
- The 2010 Australasian Society for HIV Medicine 22nd conference will be held on 22 October 2010 at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Sydney. To find out more information see their [website](#)
- If you want to find out what journalism holds in the age of social media see the [Media140](#) website for more information. Held in Sydney on 5–6 November 2009, this international collaboration has speakers from broadcasting, academia and social media, among others.

- A recently released book titled *First do no harm* is now available through McGraw-Hill. *Being a Resilient Doctor in the 21st Century* by Leanne Rowe & Michael Kidd is about rediscovering the joy of being a great doctor.

Members

The AMWA Executive Committee meet by teleconference monthly and discuss new members for approval. We are pleased to announce the following new AMWA member: Marion Newall

Websites we like

For those times when you need to check your grammar, defend your grammar, or just learn more, the University of Ottawa has Hypergrammar, at <http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/hypergrammar/>

----- **Vale: Pamela Johnson** -----

The AMWA executive committee was saddened to hear of the death of Pamela Johnson in July 2009. Pamela was involved in the European Medical Writers Association (EMWA) and was instrumental in assisting AMWA develop the PDP program. She most recently lived in Paris and is survived by her son Christophe.



Contacts

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www.medicalwriters.org

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