

## **News from Scleroderma Australia**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Systemic Sclerosis World Congress to be held in Florence, Italy from 11 – 13 February 2010**

This is certainly an important meeting for all living with Scleroderma.

The aim of the congress is to foster outstanding research into the cause(s) and understanding of systemic sclerosis and to improve clinical care and awareness of Scleroderma worldwide.

It is a conference that will involve medical specialists from a wide range of disciplines from around the world – cardiologists, dermatologists, nephrologists, pulmonologists and rheumatologists.

There is to be a special focus on young investigators in a program fostering direct contact with the experts in all these fields for it is the young investigators who will be relied upon to continue the investigations and research into the future.

As part of the congress, there is also to be a Patient Programme to be held on Friday 12 February with medical experts from around the world. Those attending the Patient Programme are also welcome to attend the scientific sessions as well.

Scleroderma Australia is aware that this is a very important event and that it was imperative for a representative of Scleroderma Australia to attend. At the General Meeting held on 7 September it was agreed to fund Ms Robyn Sims to attend as the representative of Scleroderma Australia. We are sure that Robyn will be a great asset at this meeting and we shall look forward to the reports she brings back.

Scleroderma Australia has been notified that another of the Victorian members she will be also attending the congress. If there is a chance that others are planning a trip to that part of the world, we would encourage them to take time to also attend the congress – but remember, February is a chilly time in Florence.

For more details of the 1<sup>st</sup> Systemic Sclerosis World Congress the website is :  
<http://www.aimgroup.it/2010/sclerosiscongress/patient.html>

The Annual General Meeting of Scleroderma Australia was held following the General Meeting on 7 September 2009. It was at this meeting that the progress of the last twelve months was reviewed and reports from the President, Treasurer and the Secretary were accepted.

At this meeting, the officers of the Executive were also elected and for the next twelve months they are:

President	Jan Elliott
Vice President	Robyn Sims
Treasurer	Iain Pizzey
Secretary	Vicki Snow

As there have been some changes to the delegates of the state organizations, the meeting welcomed Marline Squance, a delegate for NSW and Neil Johnson, Kim Armstrong-Wood and Maureen Goddard as delegates for Western Australia.

We are sorry Margaret Nunn is to resign as a delegate for WA in November 2009 but pleased that she has agreed to act as a co-opted member to the Executive to report on our

involvement with the Medical and Scientific Advisory Board, with regard to the website registrations and the Research Grants process.

Our speaker was Ms Barbara Gemmell who is the Scleroderma Nurse at St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne. Barbara spoke about her role as the Scleroderma Nurse and the importance of her role as a link between patients and the doctors.

Scleroderma Australia looks forward to a busy and successful year ahead with the aim to produce additional educational brochures, to promote the cause of Scleroderma at all times but particularly throughout the Awareness Month in March 2010 and by encouraging the growth of membership throughout this period.