



The green flash of involvement



By Jan Rusman

President of the Medical Students' Association of Notre Dame

Everyone talks about some fateful day; a moment of clarity. For Jules Verne it was the green flash – the last rays of sun as it sets behind the water – and if you see it, then indeed that is your moment. I've had perhaps three, noting that generally they come at inopportune moments. The first was when my jalopy broke down in the middle of perhaps the busiest intersection in Sydney. The second was when I swept up a child in my arms to stop it running into traffic. The third – and most recent – happened at a late night meeting of a sub-committee of the Postgraduate Medical Council (the PMC-JMO) at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. For me, this was essentially a call to get involved.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not particularly zealous of my belief in representative bodies. I prefer to throw my allegiance in with the few who are out there 'getting on with it'. And yet sometimes, despite my scepticism, I find myself wholly impressed. And so it was at

that late night PMC meeting. Young doctors keen to make a difference, tired but energetic, friendly, and driven with a practical sensibility and common purpose.

They were scheduling for a representative to go to a hospital to ensure that there were enough basic systems in place for the incoming interns. Discussing intern in-hospital supervision and education hours, the availability and funding for specialization programs, they are a feeder for the larger PMC which receives federal ministerial support.

I hope that such effective committees continue to be supported by the medical community, as the pay-off to patient care, while difficult to measure, must be significant.

Happily, the PMC members are not the only ones making a concerted and successful effort to get involved in the medical community.

I've stumbled across AMSA and its organized, pointed, and speedy political representation of medical students. Most impressive to me was AMSA's efforts on the ground – the national blood donation drive

last year is but one example.

I've also been astounded by the efforts of Notre Dame students to get involved.

They successfully engage with both the broader general community and other medical students; attending and participating in WAMSS projects and with other medical student societies further a-field.

Notre Dame students also throw their support behind existing programs such as Dr YES, The Fremantle Doctors, John Flynn scholarships, and rural-based vacation experiences.

But they are also not afraid to support and develop fresh new projects in league with the rest of the nation-wide body of medical students. Getting involved in setting up the first Developing World Conference is but one example.

All this within the school's first year instils me with confidence that Notre Dame students will make a potent contribution to the medical community.

I've got to tell you – I'm inspired by all this activity!



Challenges ahead for new executive



By John Zorbas

President of the West Australian Medical Students' Society

January 23 heralded the start of a new year for the fourth and fifth year UWA medical student cohorts. For those of us in fourth year, it felt like our first day at school; having finally completed our pre-clinical three year slog it was time to enter the hospitals. While there were no mothers seeing their kids off, or students crying due to their new found loneliness, there were many haircuts, freshly pressed clothes, and for some, wearing shoes was a new found nuisance. All, however, were happy to see familiar faces again and be back in the swing of things.

For WAMSS, last October was the crucial handover period. The old committee members were allowed to sit back, relax and pass on

responsibility to the new incoming committee.

For me, this means having to continue the excellent standard set by Michael Winlo and his team in 2005, a task made a little easier by the high calibre executive that WAMSS has for 2006. This year sees Tim Ford in the position of Vice President, Emma Dudman as Secretary and Jeremy Hill as Treasurer.

Over the past few months, we've all been working hard to bring the affairs of WAMSS into order for 2006, and it's set to be a very eventful and exciting year. WAMSS now has two new officer positions (International and Wellbeing), which are set to broaden the perspectives of medical students, both externally and internally.

Of course, the old portfolios are set to continue improving and 2006 will see both greater social events and exciting educational seminars. The AMSA Convention is also to be held in Perth this year, being organised by James Anderson and his excellent team.

This will give WAMSS a greater opportunity to forge links with other medical schools across Australia, including our own WA counterparts from Notre Dame.

Meanwhile, we'll be preparing for the intake of new students and the return of the old when pre-clinical students return in March.

Watch this space, and I'll keep you posted on developments during the year and the lives of medical students in general.