

# International Conference Sydney 2009



## Mission

To empower the young to make the best choices for a safe life, through our leading drug and health education programs



## Strategic Intent

To lead the field in drug and health education programs

## Vision

All children enjoying life free from the effects of drug misuse



# From the Chairman

In December 2009, our 30th Anniversary year of Life Education in Australia, it was my great pleasure to welcome delegates from around the world to our inaugural International Conference.

This was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to exchange ideas, share knowledge and to be excited and reinvigorated by the many topics covered by our renowned international speakers.

The Life Education Program should be experienced by every child in our respective communities and as such we are faced with considerable challenges to achieve our goal. Since its inception in 1979, over 4 million children have experienced the Life Education message in Australia and 10 million worldwide.

Our hope is that this International Conference, in bringing us together to share our knowledge and vision, has strengthened our resolve and ability to reach many more children world wide.

It was gratifying, not only to have had so many of Life Education's National, State and Territory colleagues attend, but to host some of our international partners at that inclusive event. It was a unique opportunity for us all to widen our networks, share our teaching methods and to know that you are a very valuable part of this outstanding international organisation.

I would like to thank the Chairman of the Conference Organising Committee, Steve Kelton and his team for staging a very successful meeting, and I know that many staff of Life Education at head office contributed enormously to bringing about that success.



Tony Hasham AM  
Chairman



Tony Hasham AM &  
The Hon John Aquilina MP,  
Leader of the House, NSW Parliament

These photos were taken at a Welcome Cocktail Party for our overseas delegates and board members. It was held in the Library of NSW Parliament House, and was hosted by John Aquilina MP, Secretary of the House.



Constance Ching, Hong Kong, Lucilia Hoi, Claudia Cheung & Wendy Chan, Macau & David Markey Yates



Paul Siviour, Jay Bacik & The Hon Alan Cadman OAM



Steve Kelton, Clare Payne, Frank Budeja & Simon Harris



Stephen Burgess, UK, The Hon Bob Ellicott QC & Stuart Bryce

# Synopsis of Results from the Post-Conference Survey

Approximately 25% of delegates responded to the survey.

The majority of those who attended and responded were educators.

78.7% of delegates thought the pre-conference communication & information was excellent to good.

93.65% of delegates thought the registration process excellent to good.

97.9% of delegates rated the speakers & topics excellent to good.

100% of delegates rated the conference facilities excellent to good.

85.4% of delegates rated the 30th Anniversary Dinner excellent to good.

85.4% of delegates agreed with the length of the conference sessions.

95.8% of delegates thought the content of the conference sessions was appropriate & informative.

91% of delegates rated the quality of the speakers high to very high.

85% of delegates rated the usefulness of the speakers high to very high.

100% of delegates agreed the conference was well organised.

100% of delegates agreed the conference staff were helpful & courteous.

92.85% of delegates agreed the conference helped them establish personal & professional contacts.

89.6% of delegates agreed the conference gave them ideas & knowledge to do their jobs better.

89.2% of delegates agreed the conference gave them ideas that they will share with their colleagues.

93.3% of delegates agreed the conference helped them face their job with renewed enthusiasm.

In relation to what type of sessions you would like to see at a future conference:

35% wanted more interactive workshops including communication & program delivery

12.5% wanted more program related workshops

12% would want Andrew Fuller included again

7.5% wanted more on cyber bullying

5% wanted Chris's puppetry techniques training; training on our program delivery; talk by Wayside Chapel staff; more time to share ideas with other staff

2.5% wanted more Australian program presentations; education on role playing & small group ideas; implementation of o/s models ie HKG or UK; more variety in speakers; less sitting in one spot.

In relation to what was most liked about the conference:

40% liked the networking opportunities provided

38% liked the presentations and speakers

20% liked Andrew Fuller's workshop day

13% liked the overall organisation

11% liked the inspiration it gave them, and the positive team vibe

9% liked the venue and food; the visit to the Wayside Chapel

5% liked the Harold puppetry

2.5% liked the learning opportunity.



Educators busy exchanging ideas and teaching techniques at the Andrew Fuller workshop

# The Speakers -

Having such high calibre, outstanding international and locally recognised speakers was a highlight and added much value to the Conference. Our key speakers were presented with a Life Education plaque commemorating their participation in Life Education's inaugural International Conference.



Australian entrepreneur and philanthropist Dick Smith AO opened the event, with his topic *Preparing our Young People for a Positive Future*. He spoke about his early involvement with the Life Ed and his relationship with the late Rev Ted Noffs and his concept of the Family of Man. Dick took the original moving Harold and detachable body parts and used his expertise to design a simpler model with integrated circuits. He also put in half the finance to build and open the National learning centre at Colyton, NSW. Dick believes in teaching children about responsible risk taking and that our centres are a most successful way of communicating to young Australians how wonderful the body is - both from a cost and benefit point of view. He believes that from a small amount of resources, we can reap incredible effects.



Trevor Grice spoke about the New Zealand program and about the exciting news of Healthy Harold as the first giraffe in Space on the Discovery Shuttle, 200 miles above earth! Trevor was also kind enough to sign copies of his book *The Great Brain Robbery* for our enthusiastic delegates. He said: *Puberty brings with it a range of doubts. They want to be taller, have less acne, belong, be different. They worry about school, begin being interested in the opposite sex. They fear rejection, they negotiate family, there's bullying. Into this mix you have the peer pressure of drinking. It's like putting a match under a fire-cracker, and their brains are just not ready to handle it.*



Associate Professor Dan Lubman gave an inspiring talk on *Substance Use and the Adolescent Brain: Targets for early intervention*. It was a powerful and sometimes frightening scenario which he portrayed, but made positive by the exceptional preventive work he and his team are doing in this field. Dan heads the Substance Use Research & Recovery Focussed Program at ORYGEN Research Centre, where he leads a clinical research team focused on investigating substance use and comorbidity and inhalent use in youth. He is also exploring neurobiological mechanisms underpinning addiction, including the impact of substance use on adolescent brain development.



From Canada came Hubert Sacy, Director General of Éduc'alcool, who proved to be an amusing and insightful speaker on his topic *Alcohol Prevention- If Education does not work, try Ignorance!* He showed us the model used in Quebec of Loser Town, where young people play an on-line game to decide on healthy choices in drinking. He commented that: *Our objectives are to make youths aged between 12-16 more aware of the effects of alcohol use and abuse. To reach a very difficult target group through humour and clever interactive technology to bring the message home. Reality is far from ideology and life is quite simple: the fact of the matter is that bad education programs do not work. And, guess what, bad policies do not work either. But good policies and good education do work.*



Closer to home, from Sydney, Australian writer, broadcaster, historian and political commentator, Professor Ross Fitzgerald spoke about *Absintence: The Ultimate Solution for Addiction*. Ross spoke about the culture of drinking in Australia and its associated drug abuse: *In the twenty-first century, one disturbing trend is an exponential increase, among Australians aged 16 to 24, in out-of-control drinking, and especially of binge drinking in teenage girls. This problem is accentuated if, as so often happens, teenagers use other drugs including ecstasy, ice, cocaine, and especially marijuana, which is cultivated hydroponically and is therefore so much stronger than it used to be 20 or 30 years ago.*



From Belgium - and straight from the airport after his long flight to Sydney! - came Peer van der Kreeft, head of De Sleutel, their largest organisation dealing with drug problems. His talk involved many proven and relevant statistics on the cause and effect of drug abuse. Peer said that, *Some people think that if you do anything within the scope of prevention, it will have effect. The evidence based EU-Dap program shows that you should and can prove effectiveness of the drug prevention efforts. Not only financiers and authorities need such proof, but also the teachers, parents and pupils we ask to participate in our programs.*



Chairman of Life Education Australia, Tony Hasham AM spoke on the topic Alcohol, the Dark Side. Tony spoke about undertaking an attitudinal change to the way in which Australians consume alcohol and the current morbidity associated with alcohol abuse. *More than 22,000 people die in Australia annually as a result of drug and alcohol abuse. The damage can be measured in the tens of thousands of hospital beds occupied and the thousands of families torn apart with a cost that exceeds fifteen billion dollars annually.*

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Former LE South Australia CEO Jo Baxter is now Executive Officer for Drug Free Australia and Vice President of the World Federation Against Drugs. Her topic was *Illicit Drug Use in Australia in the Context of World Usage*. She has worked in health, education and community services, focusing on issues relating to the impact of alcohol and drugs for over ten years, including educational program development, training and quality assurance, life skills, action research and work within a drug rehabilitation facility. After speaking at our Conference she represented Australia at a high level Drug Forum in Denmark.



Professor Helen McGrath is an adjunct professor in the School of Education at RMIT University and lectures at Deakin University, as well as practicing as a counselling psychologist and consultant. Her topic was *Cyber Safety - effective practices for students, teachers and parents that keep young people safe from harm* and proved to be a very popular talk at the conference. Helen was chief investigator for several research studies conducted by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood and is an executive member of the National Centre Against Bullying. She also is a research project director for the AMF's Cybersafety Schools Accreditation Framework.



Angela Green is a current Life Education educator and spoke on *Essential Pharmacology - the Science of Drugs*, based on her work in the field of alcohol and other drugs (adolescence). She has worked to address the difficulties of changing the behaviour of those struggling with alcohol or other drugs problems and her passion is to inform young people before they start making poor choices about their health and safety, and to help them develop skills that will keep them safe when faced with a challenging or dangerous situation. She spoke to us about instilling in young people the belief that they get it right most of the time and that they belong - helping to improve their self-esteem and confidence.

## Some post-Conference Comments

From Peter Cox, CEO of Life Education Trust in New Zealand: *On behalf of the Kiwi party thank you for the invitation to participate & our congratulations on a successful conference. It was a thrill to meet so many within the wider world community of Life Education to share our knowledge, our differences & our dreams for the future. I think Ted Noffs would have been very proud of what has been achieved.*

From Vence Poon, LEAP Hong Kong: *My colleagues and I just had a sharing session with our staff here about the conference today as we all found the workshops/presentations very fruitful.*

From Fiona McDougall, Program Manager Midwest Life Education: *It was great to network and I made some valuable contacts.*

From Darwyn Jolly, Director of Sales & Marketing, Royal Randwick: *Just a brief thank you to Life Ed for taking care of me and the hundreds of guests in the ballroom of the Four Seasons Hotel on Saturday evening for the Life Education Australia Dinner. The night was most enjoyable including the history lesson provided by Barry Crocker on Banjo Patterson/Waltzing Matilda. Being positioned near one of your Conference Guest Speakers at the table, the discussion of alcohol consumption was a real eye opener particularly for our Manager of Security. At Royal Randwick, we experience issues with the consumption of alcohol on race days so it was quite an education for us to learn what the 'Life Education Organisation' is doing to improve the welfare of today's society and communities.*

Suzi Spedding, Educator, Life Ed Top End, NT: *I liked meeting other Educators and staff with whom I'd only previously spoken over the phone or via email.*

From Thalie Carpenter, Educator, LE Townsville & District: *I enjoyed hearing inspirational and motivating keynote presenters and the Andrew Fuller workshop.*

Leanne Goggin, Educator, LENS: *I enjoyed listening to the international Life Ed speakers ie Life Ed Macau & Life Ed NZ.*

Tony Hunt AO, LEA Board: *I really enjoyed meeting with educators.*

Gail Hill-Hartporter, Educator, LE QLD: *I really liked meeting national and international colleagues, and hearing about centres outside Australia.*

# International Presentations

Our colleagues from the various Life Education offices around the globe spoke to us individually about what was happening in their countries, and to give us an overview of their programs. These were highly enlightening sessions, and offered us an insight into their work, whilst underlining the fact that we all share similar issues.



Constance Ching, CEO  
of LEAP Hong Kong with Healthy Harold



Sami Teikko, Education Manager  
from Life Education Finland



Angus Fletcher, Chairman  
of Life Education Trust, New Zealand



Claudia Cheung, Senior Educator  
from Life Education Centre, Macau SAR



Stephen Burgess, National Director  
of Coram Life Education UK

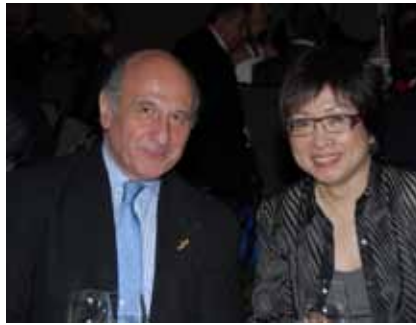


Tony Hasham AM,  
Chairman of Life Education Australia



New South Wales Educators and staff took the opportunity for a Kodak Moment in the lobby of the Four Seasons Hotel

# 30th Anniversary Celebration Dinner



# 30th Anniversary Celebration Dinner



Our international delegates from Hong Kong, Finland, Macau SAR, New Zealand and the UK all received a Certificate acknowledging their participation in the inaugural conference, which was presented to them by LEA Chairman, Tony Hasham AM.