

# Subspecialty – Ophthalmic Nurses



## Ms Rènée Du Toit (New Zealand)

### • Advanced Practice Roles for Ophthalmic Nurses in the Western Pacific Islands

Ms Du Toit is Director Workforce Development, The Fred Hollows Foundation New Zealand, and is also affiliated with the Pacific Eye Institute Fiji. During her APAO presentation, she will outline the work of specialist eye-care nurses in the Pacific – in places such as Tonga, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Timor Leste (East Timor).

“Specialist eye-care nurses provide much of the eye care in Western Pacific Island countries (WPIC) especially in rural and remote areas where there are no ophthalmologists. This presentation will explore the existing health system structures in place in WPIC to support advanced-practice eye nursing.”

“Competency-based education and academic qualifications prepare specialist eye-care nurses to fill an advanced nursing role. Colleagues and supervisors generally recognise and appreciate their competency. However, in WPIC, professional and organisational support systems are generally inadequate, and the definition of scope and conditions of service, job descriptions, clinical supervision, career structures, professional recognition, and opportunities for continuing professional development are rudimentary,” says Ms Du Toit.

“Eye care nurses are dissatisfied with the lack of professional recognition, career progression and salary increase. Relevant structures and recognition by policy makers and government is required to ensure posts for specialist eye-care nurses.” Ms Du Toit will also discuss how advocacy for professional recognition is vital to ensure the presence of specialist nursing cadres and retention in the public health service, and to continually improve performance and quality care.

During the APAO Congress, six specialist eye-care nurses from Western Pacific Island countries will also give presentations outlining the challenges and successes of their work in the Pacific.



## Mr David Garland (New Zealand)

### • The nursing role in administration of sub-Tenon’s anaesthesia

Mr Garland is a Nurse Educator and Clinical Nurse Specialist (Cataract/ Glaucoma) in the Ophthalmology Department of Greenlane Clinical Centre, Auckland District Health Board, New Zealand. His role includes the newly developed nurse specialist position in administering sub-Tenon’s anaesthesia at Auckland Hospital.

“This extended nursing role includes the pre-operative patient work-up as well as the one-day post-operation clinic examination which provides very good continuity of care for the peri-operative episode,” says Mr Garland.

“During APAO I will present an overview of the implementation of the nursing role in administration of sub-Tenon’s anaesthesia, including the processes required to be clinically certified in administering this ocular injection.”

Mr Garland will also present audit findings as part of his Masters' Thesis on the factors associated with pain and sub-Tenon's anaesthesia for patients undergoing cataract surgery. available for some of the poorest people on the planet."

"That's the reason why, in this era of phaco, it's good for ophthalmologists to learn to do SICS. At APAO I will also talk about situations where SICS is actually a better technique than phaco in the Australian or American patient."



## Ms Joanna McCulloch (Australia)

- **Improving the Outcomes of Ocular Emergencies – A multifaceted approach to changing practice in general emergency**

Ms McCulloch is Transitional Nurse Practitioner (Ophthalmology) at Sydney Eye Hospital. Her presentation during APAO will provide an overview of the Eye Education Program.

The Eye Education Program is run by ophthalmic nurses, and was designed to help address problems identified in some emergency departments where eye trauma/conditions were not being managed according to best practice. In 2007, a new Eye Emergency Manual (for non-ophthalmic clinicians) was distributed to emergency departments, rural health clinics and ophthalmic units across metropolitan, rural and remote regions throughout the state of New South Wales (Australia).

But it was not enough to just give each department the Manual. "The Eye Education Program was developed to improve assessment and management of patients presenting to the emergency departments with eye problems," says Ms McCulloch.

"The Eye Education Program is a free, one-day workshop for emergency nurses, emergency medical clinicians, paramedics, general practitioners, and non-ophthalmic clinicians which aims to address the lack of knowledge in managing ocular trauma. The workshop goes through the Eye Emergency Manual and also incorporates practical skills such as vision testing and slit lamp. The workshop is supported by an educational CD and learning modules (which can also be accessed online)."

"In the two years since the Eye Education Program's inception, survey results have shown a strong improvement in ophthalmic knowledge and skill levels. The target audience has expanded to meet the needs of other health practitioners including Aboriginal Health Care Workers and Military Medics. So far more than 800 clinicians have been through this program and, as a result of a 'train the trainers' initiative, previous workshop participants are now presenting the program to others," says Ms McCulloch.

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**Note:** All effort has been made to check facts with each presenter. The writer accepts responsibility for any inadvertent errors in transcript.