



ACT State News



The patient to patient transmission of HIV plus the transmission of Hep C via respiratory equipment and the subsequent media coverage of both these tragic events greatly publicised what infection control is all about.

Recently in Sydney, I was in a queue, with a green backpack satchell slung over one shoulder. The satchell was given to registrants at the 7th AICA Conference in Hobart in September 1993. A lady queuing behind me obviously read the words on the satchell, then tapped me on the shoulder and to my surprise asked the question "infection control - what's that?" I proceeded to enlighten her! With all the publicity we could be of the opinion that our speciality is known about by the general public, but this incident leaves me wondering! It is to be hoped that it was a "one off".

The practice of reuse of medical devices labelled as single use continues in many hospitals. It appears that some single use items are not always adequately cleaned and decontaminated/sterilised before reuse. There also remains the fact that disposal of single use items is seen as financially

wasteful and environmentally damaging. Recommendations determined by the Expert Panel on Reuse of Medical Devices Labelled as Single Use on this subject should go forward to the National Health and Medical Research Council late in November. All infection control practitioners will welcome national guidelines.

The AGM of ICA ACT was held on 5th July last. The Office Bearers are:
President and ICA ACT representative on AICA Executive:

- Helen Bedford, Clinical Nurse

Consultant, Community Infection Control, Public Health Division ACT Department of Health

Treasurer:

- John de Vry, Chief Scientist and Head of Microbiology, Moran Pathology.

Secretary:

- Dianne Dreimanis A/g Nursing Staff Officer, Woden Valley Hospital

Public Relations Officer:

- Elaine Men, Infection Control Officer, John James Memorial Hospital



Left to Right: John de Vry, Dianne Dreimanis, Helen Bedford, Elaine Men

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Amalgadent



As President of the Infection Control Association of South Australia Inc it is with pleasure I introduce you to the newly elected Committee.

Jacqui McLean (President) has been employed at the Royal Adelaide Hospital as Infection Control Consultant for four years and represents the hospital on the State Supply Contracts Advisory Committee for Medical and Surgical Supplies. Jacqui is the ICASA representative to the Infectious Diseases Clinical Program Committee and is currently preparing an Infection Control elective as part of the Graduate Diploma in Clinical Nursing Studies which commences in 1996.

Meredith Ochota (Immediate Past President) has been employed in Infection Control at Flinders Medical Centre for ten years and currently has the position of Clinical Nurse Consultant. Meredith is at present Infection Control Auditor for AMADA Quality Management.

Marilyn Leaver (Vice President) is the Infection Control Consultant at Wakefield Hospital and is in her 10th year of infection control. Marilyn is the private Hospitals' Association representative to the Infectious Diseases Clinical Program Committee and is Chair of the Infection Control Subcommittee.

Fiona Murphy (Secretary) is the Infection Control Consultant at a large extended care facility catering for adults with acquired brain damage and those with degenerative neurological disorders. Fiona is also a member of the Infectious Diseases Clinical Program

South Australian State News



ICASA Inc Committee. From left to right: Back Row: Marilyn Parkes, Jude Bail, Meredith Ochota, Fiona Murphy, Jill O'Brien. Front Row: Paulina May, Jacqui McLean, Helle Douglas. Absent: Marilyn Leaver

Subcommittee.

Paulina May (Treasurer) has been employed in Infection Control within the private sector for the past three years and is currently applying her knowledge of Infection Control in the planning of a purpose built Intensive Care Unit.

Jude Bail (Membership Officer) is the Infection Control Officer for the South Australian Dental Service and is currently involved in infection control auditing of South Australian Dental Service Clinics.

Marilyn Parkes (Committee Member) has recently made a career change from Infection Control Nurse to Wound Management Consultant at Faulding Pharmaceuticals.

Jill O'Brien (Committee Member) has been employed as Infection Control Practitioner for the past eight years at Modbury Hospital. Jill represents her hospital on State Supply Contracts Advisory Committee for Medical and Surgical Supplies and Wound Care.

Helle Douglas (Committee Member) is a Registered Midwife who has held the Infection Control portfolio at a small country hospital in the heart of the Barossa Valley for the past three years and is allocated one day per month to carry out Infection Control duties.

One of the aims of ICASA Inc is to promote standardisation of infection control practices and procedures throughout the state. Many of the Committee are involved in the working party which continues to produce additions to the State Infection Control Manual; **Guidelines for Infection Control in Health Care Establishments**. Members are continuing with this aim at present in preparing an Infection Control Seminar for General Practice Personnel in September 1995.

With this change of officers, enthusiasm and commitment remain strong as we look forward to working with you in leading the organisation through the coming year.

Successful Seminar for Office Practice Personnel

Following the introduction of voluntary accreditation in South Australia of Doctors and Dentists office practices under the auspices of AMADA Quality Management, a need for infection control information was identified, in particular for office practice personnel.

The Infection Control Association of South Australia (ICASA) Inc provided a seminar, trade display and refreshments for 91 registrants on the evening of 21 September 1995, which was a sellout and some intending registrants had to be deferred to the next Seminar, planned for early 1996. Eight companies provided information on a variety of topics associated with the programme. Several members of the Association in addition to invited guest speakers gave brief presentations on various aspects of the accreditation process and requirements. Question time was provided. Evaluation forms provided feedback on most/least valuable sessions. Topics judged most valuable by registrants include

- principles of sterilisation
- office environment
- steriliser monitoring
- waste and linen management

Suggestions for additional topics/seminars were also made, and these included cleaning of instruments for nonmedical background personnel, care, maintenance and use of equipment including autoclaves, hazards associated with soaking equipment, occupational health & safety and confidentiality. The level of interest continues to be high, with a number of participants requesting information at a more advanced level.

The benefits from the interdisciplinary approach to infection control in office practice has benefit for patients and clients as well as office practice personnel. Greater community interaction has developed from the provision of information by ICASA Inc to facilitate preparation for accreditation of office practice in South Australia.

How to help beat post-operative infection

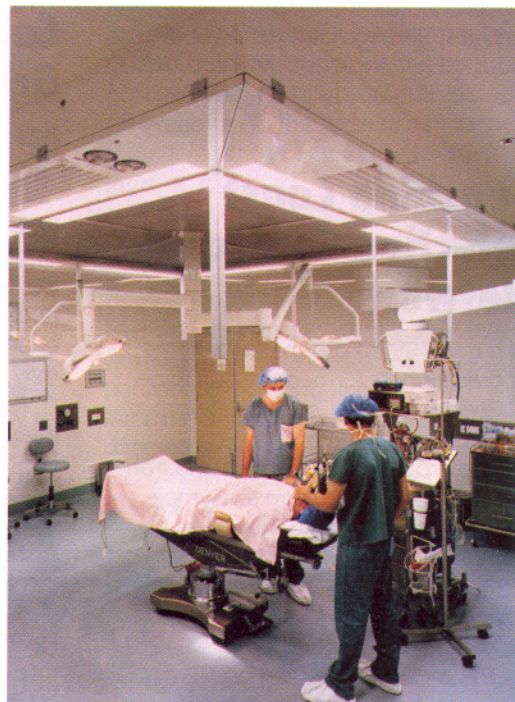
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Queensland State News



Townsville Infection Control Interest Group

The first meeting of the T.I.C.I.G. was convened by Jane Thomas from Kirwan Hospital for Women, on 3rd January 1995. The meeting was held at the Parkhaven Private Hospital and was attended by a number of interested practitioners.

The President of I.C.P.A.Q. was present and Jane Thomas was appointed Co-ordinator of the Group.

Informal meetings are held second monthly with refreshments kindly provided by a pharmaceutical company.

Attendance averages 13 which include medical and nursing practitioners from hospitals, nursing homes, pathology laboratories, a boarding school and the University with interests indicated from Ingham and Charters Towers.

The Domiciliary Nursing Services are well represented which is an indication of the shift to community/home based practice.

Guest speakers at meetings have included a Pathologist, an Infectious Diseases Registrar and an Infection Control Practitioner.

Sunshine Coast Infection Control Network

In mid 1993 a group of interested practitioners formed the Sunshine Coast Infection Control Network (S.C.I.C.N.)

The group draws its members from an area from Caboolture to Gympie and west to Kingaroy. They meet formally every three months.

The Secretary is Liz. Macdonald from Selangor Private Hospital and she can be contacted by phone on 074 412311.

The meetings are held on a rotational basis at hospitals in the area and are chaired by the Infection Control Practitioner from the host hospital.

In December 1994 S.C.I.C.N offered to host the 1996 I.C.P.A.Q. Conference and Trade Display. This offer was accepted by the Management Committee of I.C.P.A.Q. and a Conference Committee of S.C.I.C.N. members was convened.

This committee has worked very hard and has already structured what will be an exciting conference for 1996.

The details of this Conference will be announced by Liz. Macdonald (Conference Convener) at the 1995 State Conference on October 14th.

ICPAQ Inc 1995 State Conference

Registrations for The State Conference and Trade Display which is to be held at the Society of St Vincent de Paul Conference Centre on 13 & 14th October are now being received.

Those interested in attending the conference are urged to apply for registrations early to ensure space.

Country Interest Groups

The Infection Control Practitioners' Association of Queensland, Inc has several groups of country members who meet together as an Infection Control Interest Group, thus enjoying the benefits of networking within their peer group as well as taking advantage of any educational opportunity which may arise in their area.

Regrettably, some members of these Interest Groups are not members of I.C.P.A.Q. Inc, and thus miss the advantages of wider communication links with other members of the Association through such avenues as this journal.

A difficulty identified in small Healthcare Facilities is the fact that the role of the Infection Control Practitioner is often combined with other roles and no official recognition is given to the Infection Control component in the

form of a written position statement with fixed hours of practice.

The incumbent practitioner's position is often transient and attendance at local interest Group Meetings is a means of acquiring enough knowledge to 'get by' in the role.

It is hoped that these practitioners can be induced to join the official state body, as practitioners who are not members miss many opportunities which are available to financial members of ICPAQ Inc such as access to the scholarships offered annually by ICPAQ Inc and AICA.

These scholarships offer financial assistance which is available for conference attendance or for help with research or similar projects.

Most State Regions have Infection Control Groups which operate within the Regional Structure, but it is the informal groups which have developed in country areas that I wish to identify in this article.

Darling Downs Infection Control Special Interest Group

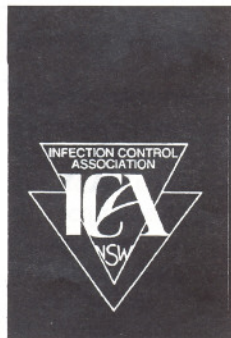
The Darling Downs Infection Control Special Interest Group (DDICSIG) meets second monthly in either Toowoomba or Dalby, but draws its members from a much wider area.

Frances Weston, from the Toowoomba Nursing Centre is the Chairman of the group and can be contacted by phone on 076 327588.

This group has a membership of approximately 40.

In October 1994 DDICSIG ran a most successful two day State Conference and Trade Display for ICPAQ in Toowoomba. The Conference was attended by over 120 persons.

DDICSIG future projects are to focus on good communication with members who are unable, through distance, to attend meetings; to expand their already useful library and to run a half day workshop.



New South Wales State News



Infection Control Policy

The New South Wales Health Department has recently released the Infection Control Policy, Circular 95/13. This circular supersedes Circular 95/50, NSW Infection Control Policy for HIV, AIDS and Associated Conditions. The document will be the backbone and support the need for change, as we initiate review of our practices.

We are aware of the mammoth task it was to attain the in-depth consultation and agreement with all professionals of the working party. We acknowledge and thank Lorraine Dorrington for her commitment and valuable insight into making this document concise and user friendly.

Copies of the policy are available from:

Better Health Centre
162 Blues Point Road
North Sydney NSW 2060
Phone 02 391 9010
Fax 02 955 5196

Infection Control Resource Centre

The NSW Health Department considers accurate current knowledge on Infection Control practice to be of paramount importance. There is a need for information to be accessible to all health care professionals, in both the public and private sectors. To this end, they are developing a resource centre in Albion Street, Surry Hills.

The centre will establish a library specifically for issues related to Infection Control, and co-ordinate an Infection Control information line, which will be available during business hours to all health care providers and to any member of the public. This service provision will minimise discrepancies of conflicting information regarding



NSW Executive. Back Row: Sue Greig, Joy Borgert, Dianne Dalton, Lorraine Dorrington. Front Row: Cathryn Murphy, Valda Mentjox, Sheila Tranter, Sue Resnik

Infection Control practice, for example Universal Precautions and Sterilisation.

It is pleasing to note, that the NSW Health Department has acknowledged the body of expertise of the Infection Control Association NSW Inc, and Sue Resnik has been seconded into the position.

EPINet Version 3 Release

During May/June, many hospitals received the Australasian version of EPINet 3 for the recording of occupational exposure to blood and body fluids. Internal data analysis by participating hospitals, will provide information for early intervention in problematic situations. Hospitals will also be able to ensure confidentiality is maintained, as the software application allows for the deletion of identifying sources of data.

The NSW Health Department is supporting the EPINet system and encouraging hospitals to participate in a central data collection. The National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research (NCHECR), will collate the data provided by participating hospitals and tabulations will be published in the Bulletin and the HIV Surveillance Report.

The evolution of this system has been the extensive work of Becton Dickinson, the Infection Control Association NSW Inc, and the NSW Health Department. From early 1996, hospitals will be encouraged to participate. Any enquiries or information required should be directed to Mr Rob Menzies, AIDS/Infectious Disease Branch, phone (02) 391 9195.

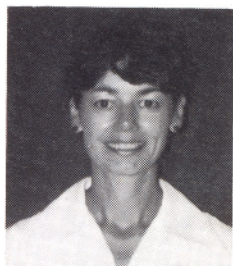
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West Australian State News



Infection Control Course for Registered nurses

Planning is well under way at Fremantle Hospital for the 1996 Infection Control Course for Registered Nurses. The two week course will commence on the 18th March 1996 with Professor C Glen Mayhall, MD as the guest lecturer.

Professor Mayhall is Professor of Internal Medicine and Hospital Epidemiology at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston and is best known as the immediate past president of the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology (SHEA).

Topics to be covered in his lectures include nosocomial pneumonia, sinusitis, surveillance of nosocomial infections, intravascular device and wound infections – all subjects he has researched in the past.

For further information contact Madeleine McPherson, Course Co-ordinator, Fremantle Hospital.

Gabby Robathan, Sub-Editor WA

Infection Control Standards

Infection Control in Australia has reached a stage where it requires a set of nationally agreed Standards that cannot only be used by us, but also by

surveyors who accredit our hospitals. Indeed, the preliminary work on these standards (which must be measurable) has already commenced. Many States have written Standards with guidelines similar to those produced by the Health Department of WA, but they are universal and in some cases not able to be used as a clear indicator of quality.

Seminars conducted recently around Australia by the Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS), launching the 'Charter for Change', have served to highlight this need. Their understanding of the role of Infection Control would obviously benefit from some clearly defined Standards and criteria. To this end, groups around Australia will be working to produce this document which must be uniformly acceptable.

In WA, a small group has met once a month on a Saturday morning in the luxurious Bethesda Hospital, with its river views and fresh muffins. Not really a hardship! The working document produced by this group has now been circulated to all States who are invited to comment and make changes. Hopefully, decisions will be made by the next AICA meeting.

It has also been agreed to canvas

the assistance of some Microbiologists who have an interest in and knowledge of Infection Control. Dr David McGeachie from Fremantle Hospital (WA), Dr Michael Whitby from Princess Alexandra Hospital (QLD) and Dr Peter Collignon from Woden Valley Hospital (ACT) have been approached. All are well known for their Infection Control knowledge and for the regard in which they are held.

There is now quite a bit of work for the combined association to do, but it will be done and by the time it is eventually completed it will be worthwhile. If any member wishes to know more, I suggest that they contact a member of the AICA executive.

Waste management has been the other "burning" issue occupying your State executive. It now seems that we are unable to reach a consensus with the Health Department WA and subsequently, talks have been abandoned. We hope that one day soon we will be able to convince them to adopt the excellent and proven guidelines in use in other States, thus saving many health dollars for a better cause.

**Madeleine McPherson,
President, ICAWA and AICA**



Tasmanian State News



As the fifty years anniversary of the end of the Second World War draws to a close, I have found myself thinking more than once over the past months about the women who went to war as nurses and the challenges they faced.

Much has been written and told of all aspects of those years and although only a child, I have my own vivid memories of family and friends, of lost faces and gaps in people's lives, that were never filled.

I felt I would like to talk to a nurse who had "been there and done that", so I was fortunate enough to meet with Miss Shena Bewglass who is one of the twelve surviving members of the Returned Nurses Association of Tasmania. Miss Bewglass trained in Queensland in the late nineteen twenties. When she went to enlist in 1939 she was told that with Four (4) certificates she was over qualified. Fortunately, Miss Bewglass was also determined and so came to Tasmania,

re-applied as a single certificate nurse and was accepted. During the course of the war, Miss Bewglass assured me she had to draw on knowledge from each of her four (4) disciplines on more than one occasion.

Lieutenant Bewglass went first to Catherine to care for prisoners of war who had just been rescued from Timor by submarine. A transfer to New Guinea followed, to a hospital under canvas. As we chatted, I realised some of the challenges faced then were

similar to some of today and some we can only image.

What did she remember as some of the greater challenges?

- The greatest "The blowflies, definitely"
- Tropical diseases – learnt about these on the run
- Shipwrecked sailors severely sunburned and dehydrated from drifting in open boats – the sheer nursing challenge of caring for these extensive burns under such conditions, but happily the infection rates was minimal.
- To search for anything fresh, green and edible – everything came in tins, no fresh food at all, except paw paws which Miss Bewglass says are "good for anything, we lived on them"

What were the worst memories?

- Always – losing one of "my boys"
- Living the experience of the first bombing raids on Townsville.

Our quarters (tents) burning to the ground and losing everything we owned except a towel

The best memories

- The mateship, fun on very rare off duty hours.
- The pre midnight swims (all nurses in by 11pm) sound familiar?
- The wonderful support of the native population and of the lasting friendships forged Miss Bewglass said "one tends to remember the good times, the bad memories seem to fade?"

She spoke of the courage and sacrifice of others and of nurses

mentioned in dispatches.

- The advent of Penicillin and the dramatic change it made.

She feels nursing has lost a lot today, rules and regulations being made by people out of touch. After the war, Miss Bewglass continued with her nursing career and worked in various senior positions in the profession. She still corresponds with some of "her boys"

As we said goodbye, Miss Bewglass invited me to come again any time and thanked me, but definitely the thanks are due to you Miss Bewglass for sharing this time with me.

Till next time,

Shasta Tonks, Sub Editor

Tasmania – Phone 002 28 8395.



Northern Territory State News



Brief History of Infection Control in the N.T.

As a follow-on from Alison Pyper's comments on Infection Control in the Territory, I thought I would provide some background on the focus Infection Control has had in the Territory since first starting at Darwin Hospital (now Royal Darwin) in November 1972 and then in Alice Springs Hospital in mid 1974.

Although both Alice Springs and Darwin Hospitals initially concentrated on post-operative wound surveillance, the programs were widened in 1979 to incorporate surveillance of all nosocomial infections. As a spin off from this, the high levels of community acquired infections among admissions were also monitored. An increase in pulmonary tuberculosis cases highlighted the need for a stronger focus on primary health, resulting in the establishment of the Disease Control Branch in the mid 1980's. This Department has Territory-wide responsibility for programs focusing on disease prevention and control. Close liaison exists between this Department and hospital based Infection Control Centres.

In 1991 Territory hospitals were linked by a computerised "Hospital

Information System" (HIS) which has a common patient master index. This means that patients have a unique identification number linking their medical records across the Territory.

As part of HIS, the infection surveillance program was computerised giving all Infection Control personnel online access to computerised patient hospital episodes and operations. Four types of infection records can be created for individuals on the system. This enables us to record specific infections by category and causative micro-organism; register biohazard injuries or exposures; create infection alerts, and to monitor specific "carrier" conditions.

This system is online at Katherine, Tennant Creek and Gove Hospitals as well as Darwin and Alice Springs. At the smaller hospitals, Registered Nurses have been appointed with combined roles in Quality Assurance and Infection Control. Additional duties such as Theatre and CSD Management have also been added to the role at the smaller hospital at Gove (30 beds) and Tennant Creek (20 beds).

A very handy computerised bed tracking program is part of the computer system. This records all patient ward and bed locations from admission,

discharge and transfer screens. This information is then used by Infection Control and Disease Control to identify "contacts" when specific epidemiology studies are being undertaken.

We find our computerised surveillance system very handy. It runs on the Medilink Operating System on a "mainframe" style computer and generating a comprehensive range of reports is a whiz!

Community Infection Control.

From a Territory Health Department perspective, the Territory is divided into two operational areas of North and South. Infection Control Sections in the two major hospitals assist and support the staff in their operational areas. Plans are underway to create a position for a Community Infection Control Nurse who would focus on the needs of private and public community health services across the Territory. This will be a very challenging position for who ever has the courage to pick it up when it becomes available. The Territory is a vast area and the ideal applicant would need to love travelling, flying in small planes, and bouncing around in 4X4 Wheel Drives. If this is you, keep your eye out for when the position is advertised.

Anne Arthur, Darwin



Victorian State News



Meet your Executive Committee

The Executives of VICNA are now eleven. At the Annual General Meeting it was agreed to raise the number from the constitutional requirement of nine to enable the committee to meet the objectives of VICNA in these busy times.

The committee are strongly committed to addressing the issues that are relevant to members, promoting our group as professionals and providing services to members and other groups as best we can.

The committee meets usually on the third Wednesday of each month at 4.00pm at The Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre. Issues currently being addressed include:

- Development of a new member's kit
- Education sessions and short courses for areas of need
- The state and national conferences
- Potential constitutional change relating to the name
- Infection control standards for Victoria.

VICNA is represented on several committees including the Standing Committee on Infection Control (H&CS) and Victorian Hospitals Association. All committee members are available to contact for information or to relay issues of concern. Members are encouraged to contact the committee member closest to your regional area.

Coralie Tyrrell Membership Secretary

Qualifications: Certificates in Sterilization and Infection Control, Computer Business Applications and Chronic Wound Management

Consultant Course. Employed at West Gippsland Hospital Warragul. Phone (056) 23 0611.



Rhea Martin (No Photo Available) Secretary

Qualifications: Certificates in Sterilization and Infection Control and Critical Care, Bachelor of Nursing and undertaking Masters studies. Employed at Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre, West Heidelberg.

Phone (03) 9496 2111.

Ann Maree Keenan (No photo available) Treasurer

Qualifications: Certificates in Sterilization and Infection Control Employed at Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre, West Heidelberg. Phone (03) 9496 2111.

Ross Peck (No photo available) Newsletter Editor and Journal Sub Editor

Qualifications: Certificate in Sterilization and Infection Control. Employed at Ballarat Base Hospital. Phone (053) 20 4000.

Bronwen Mander President

Qualifications: Certificate in Sterilization and Infection Control, Bachelor of App. Sci Nursing and undertaking Graduate Diploma studies. Employed at Western Hospital, Footscray. Phone (03) 319 6666.



Bronwyn Holbeche Assistant Conference Convenor

Qualifications: Certificate in Sterilization and Infection Control and Churchill Fellow. Employed at P.A.N.C.H., Preston. Phone (03) 9285 2222.



Sue Scott (No photo available) Assistant Publicity and Promotions

Qualifications: Certificate in Sterilization and Infection Control. Employed at Royal Children's Hospital, Parkville. Phone (03) 9345 5522.

Janine Clark Conference Convenor

Qualifications: Certificate in Sterilization and Infection Control, Bachelor of Nursing and Graduate Diploma in Health Education and Promotion. Employed at Box Hill Hospital. Phone (03) 9895 3333.

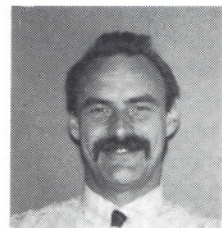


Jane Hellsten (No photo available) Assistant Newsletter Editor and Journal Sub Editor

Qualifications: Certificate in Infectious Diseases, Bachelor of App Sci Nursing and undertaking Masters Studies. Employed at Bendigo Base Hospital. Phone (054) 41 0222.

Kevin Kendall Publicity and Promotions

Qualifications: Certificates in Sterilization and Infection Control. Employed at Fairfield Hospital. Phone (03) 9280 2222.



Melissa Aberline (No photo available) Education Co-ordinator

Undertaking graduate studies. Employed at Monash Medical Centre, Clayton. Phone (03) 9550 1111.