

## President's Message

The 2013 EHPA Professional Development Symposium "Lighting the Path to Change" was held at the RACV Resort in Cape Schanck, Victoria during September. It was an extremely well attended event with a high calibre of key note speakers and presenters.

The symposium's theme highlighted the ever changing nature of environmental health due to the continual changes in the environment, politics, science and practice. It also provided an insight into an array of approaches and scientific research which is helping practitioners respond to and lead change.

Symposiums such as this provide the opportunity to learn from presentations and case studies as well as network with other professionals. The organising committee should be congratulated on preparing and delivering an exceptional program that was not only varied and interesting, but relevant to all environmental health practitioners and other allied professionals. I would like to thank Bernadet Ferraro, Nectaria Kapsaskis, Sam Salamone, David Esmore, Mark Upton and Monica Rooney for their time and dedication in delivering the symposium.

It should also be acknowledged that a symposium such as this cannot go ahead without the generous support of our sponsors. A thank you goes to the Department of Health, Macpherson and Kelley Lawyers, Open Office, Russell Kennedy Lawyers, Kernow Environmental Services, RIAMS Australia, HAZCON, CFT Food Safety Training, PERCO Cleaning and Restoration, McArthur recruitment and DTS Food Laboratories.

In recent months you would have received your 2013-14 renewal for your membership with Environmental Health Professionals Australia (EHPA). If you have not received your renewal, please contact our Executive Officer, Bernadet Ferraro on 03 9438 5960.

Your membership subscription fee assists EHPA in funding a range of member products and services, such as:

- Premium professional development, including the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the Certified Professional of Environmental Health (CPEH) schemes
- A nationally recognised Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
- Enhancements to EHPA's website
- Quarterly newsletters and regular e-news updates
- Access to Special Interest Groups and EHPA Regional Group meetings
- Forums, conferences and courses, which are provided to members at subsidised rates

- Advocacy and representation for all members on significant issues relating to Environmental Health

EHPA welcomes the participation of members throughout the organisation and thanks those that are already involved. By being an active member you are able to join a Special Interest Group, become involved with EHPA's sub-committees, contribute to the quarterly newsletter or even represent EHPA as a Director on the Board.

If you have a keen interest in being actively involved please contact our Executive Officer, Bernadet Ferraro on 9438 5960 or visit our website for further information.

Best Regards,

Nick Lund MEHPA AIMM

President

## NEWS

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## Environmental Health Team and Council Profile - Wyndham City Council

| EHP Name            | Role                         |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Sandy Forster       | EHO                          |
| Robert Page         | EHO                          |
| Raph Uy             | EHO                          |
| Jessa Dimabuyu      | EHO                          |
| Fred Pollak         | EHO                          |
| Hayley Carmichael   | EHO                          |
| Mery Siddiqui       | Senior EHO                   |
| Christine Salm      | Senior EHO                   |
| Sylvia Janus        | Senior EHO (Maternity Leave) |
| Brooke Hutcheon     | Coordinator EH               |
| Yonas Sharew        | Student EHO                  |
| Jennifer Larrangaga | Health Technical Officer     |

### Council Location

Wyndham is located in Melbourne's outer west in the growth corridor between Geelong and Melbourne. The major centre of Wyndham City Council is Werribee which is located around 30 kilometres from Melbourne.

### Council Profile

The estimated population of Wyndham City Council as of June 2013 is 187,788 people representing a 7.1 per cent annual growth rate.

Wyndham has experienced the largest and fastest growth in all Victorian local government areas and is the third fastest growing in Australia. Its estimated residential population is set to exceed 245,000 people by 2021.

Spanning 542 square kilometers on a coastal plain on the western fringe of Melbourne, the City is home to a diversity of sectors: strong industrial and technology districts, two major retail precincts, intensive vegetable growing areas and grazing lands. Key tourism and open space attractions such as the Werribee Park Mansion,

Victoria's Open Range Zoo at Werribee, the State Equestrian Centre, the Point Cook Homestead and the Point Cook RAAF Museum surround the expansive urban area.

The City is large and diverse. The principal areas of population are Werribee and Hoppers Crossing, with substantial growth occurring in Tarneit, Point Cook, Truganina and Wyndham Vale. Werribee South is home to one of the most significant market garden regions in the State. The city has a major industrial area at Laverton North.

### Current Issues (EH and Council)

The changing face of Wyndham has influenced service delivery and community expectations of the municipality. Increases in numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse groups, growing numbers of professionals and the burgeoning young population are the biggest challenges to the quality of service delivery from the EH Unit. Professionals now make up the largest slice of the municipality's workforce and bring with them a higher expectation of the quality and professionalism of Council's service delivery.

Over 30 per cent of Wyndham residents were born overseas. This requires an increase in Council's awareness and understanding of differing cultural norms and creates the challenge of linguistic barriers between residents and Council staff. Almost 10 per cent of Wyndham's residents are under 5, well above the greater Melbourne average. This unique attribute to Wyndham stretches Council's Immunisation Program and will continue to be a challenge as Wyndham grows. In summary the key issues for Environmental Health are:

- Higher expectations of the community
- Increase in migrant population requiring additional resources and time
- Community expecting unique solutions
- Community expecting cross organisational responses
- Increase demand on immunisation services

### In the mornings when I/we get to work

We generally organise a "scrum" meeting dividing work up for the day. We then have a coffee or breakfast and get into the days work.



## Environmental Health Practitioner Profile

### EHP's Name

Fred Pollak

### EHP year's experience

10 Years

### Previous Councils

Woollahra, Camden and Manly Councils in Sydney; Cambridge City Council, Borough of Broxbourne and Borough of Brent in the UK; Strathbogie Shire (Kernow Environmental Services) and presently at Wyndham City Council in Victoria.

### Area of passion in EH

Food Safety and general environmental health - I don't like being a specialist I prefer to do a bit of everything.

### What am I working on at the moment?

I am looking at the complaint procedures and the work place safety within Environmental Health.

### In 50 years time the EHP will be focusing on?

I think the role will possibly be similar, however with greater emphasis placed on education.

### Likes and interests outside of EH

Skiing, travelling dining out and cooking at home.



Environmental Health Officer Fred Pollak out and about

## EHPA Workshop

EHPA board members, secretaries and convenors met in May to workshop and brainstorm ideas for the new direction of EHPA. It was a good chance for EHPA representatives to meet one another and recognise the work that individuals and groups contribute to environmental health.



Will Carroll - EHPA board member and SIG representative brainstorming ideas



EHPA board member, secretaries and convenors participating at the EHPA workshop

### When Things Aren't Cherry Ripe

**Alan Petrie**  
**Team Leader Environmental Health**  
**Moira Shire Council**

On Wednesday 6 March 2013 a cherry orchardist was convicted in the Cobram Magistrate's Court for offences against the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, incurring fines and costs totalling more than \$6000.

During October and early November 2012, Moira Shire Council received complaints from residents occupying properties adjacent to a cherry orchard, in relation to the early blasting of a scaregun from within the orchard.

As a result of the complaints, Council's Environmental Health Officer contacted the owner of the cherry orchard for the purposes of bringing to the orchardist's attention the impact that the use of his scaregun in the early hours was having on his neighbours, and to discuss alternate methods for crop protection other than using a scaregun at 5.30 a.m.

The orchardist was dismissive of Council's EHO's request for discussions, and consequently a Prohibition Notice was served on the orchardist on the 8 November 12 requiring him to:

- Not allow the operation of a scaregun earlier than 7.00 a.m or later than sunset on any day of any week
- Not allow the total time of the operation of the scaregun to exceed 12 hours in any one day
- Not allow the scaregun to emit more than 70 blasts per day.

The Prohibition Notice required the orchardist to comply within 1 day of receipt of the notice. In the days following the serving of the Notice, Council's EHOs recorded the failure of the orchardist to comply, and consequently on the 30 November 12 charges were filed against the orchardist for:

- Causing a nuisance to exist on, or emanate from, his property; and
- Failing to comply with a Prohibition Notice

As a result of the continual failure of the orchardist to comply with the Prohibition Notice, despite the serving of the charges, Council made application for an Injunction on the 4 December 12 requiring the orchardist to comply with the Prohibition Notice. The Injunction application was adjourned on the 10 December 12 on the orchardist's signed undertaking that he would comply with the Prohibition Notice.

On the 6 March 13 the orchardist pleaded guilty to both charges and was subsequently convicted with a fine of \$2500 being imposed, and with costs of \$3426.90.

The application for the Injunction that had been adjourned on 10 December 12 was also granted by the Magistrate's Court.

The ability of Council's EHOs to be efficient and effective in providing remedies to these types of complaints is hampered by:

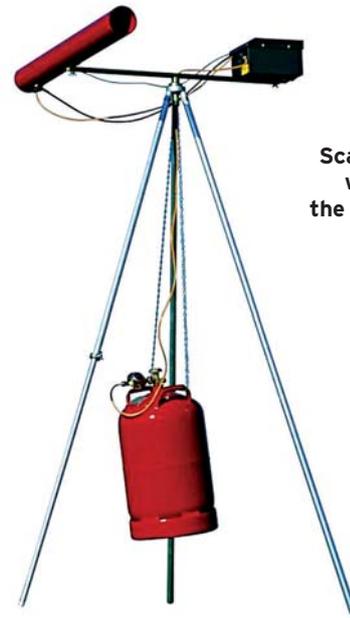
- Preparedness of witnesses (complainants) to provide testimony and statements
- Restricted powers of entry without search warrants
- Obtaining search warrants

Between late August 2012 and late February 2013 Council's EHOs received a steady flow of complaints from individual property owners claiming they were being affected by the unreasonable use of scareguns. The complainants all resided in the immediate vicinity of orchards and they all complained about the use of scareguns before 7.00 a.m. in the morning and after sunset. The loudness of the scaregun's blast was also a consistent cause for anxiety as well as the excessive frequency of the blasts.

When Council's EHOs discussed the complaints with the orchardists who were allegedly causing the nuisance, all the orchardists were dismissive amid claims of having a right to farm regardless of the effects on neighbouring residents.

The decision by Council's EHOs to pursue a particular course of action in providing a remedy to a complaint of nuisance is never prescriptive; however when the alleged offender displays a lack of intent to cooperate, the decision making process and available options for action becomes clearer.

Although the Magistrates Court's finding was welcomed by Council, it did not necessarily provide a useful precedent that may be relied upon for addressing similar circumstances of nuisance in the coming seasons. For many reasons, it would have been advantageous for Council to have had the matter go to a contest, as this may have provided the same result and therefore the outcome had been determined on the merits of Council's complaint.



**Scaregun that spins when fired to give the impression shots are coming from different areas**



**Examples of scaregun devices used to scare animals away from crops and orchards (in particular birds)**

## Food Convictions Register Case - DOC Mornington

**Chris Trebilcock**  
**Environmental Health Officer**  
**Mornington Peninsula Shire**

A Mornington restaurant responsible for the hospitalisation of a customer in October 2012, was fined \$60,000 with conviction plus Council's legal costs of \$5814.

DOC Mornington Pty Ltd trading as DOC Mornington pleaded guilty to 4 charges under the Food Act 1984 including the sale of unsafe food at the Dromana Magistrates' Court on 28th February 2013. The charges stem from the preparation, sale and consumption of a pizza contaminated with a 3.0cm piece of wire. On consumption of the pizza the victim sought medical assistance at Frankston Hospital where x-rays confirmed a metal object was lodged in his throat. The victim underwent emergency throat surgery to remove the metal and was hospitalised for a number of days.

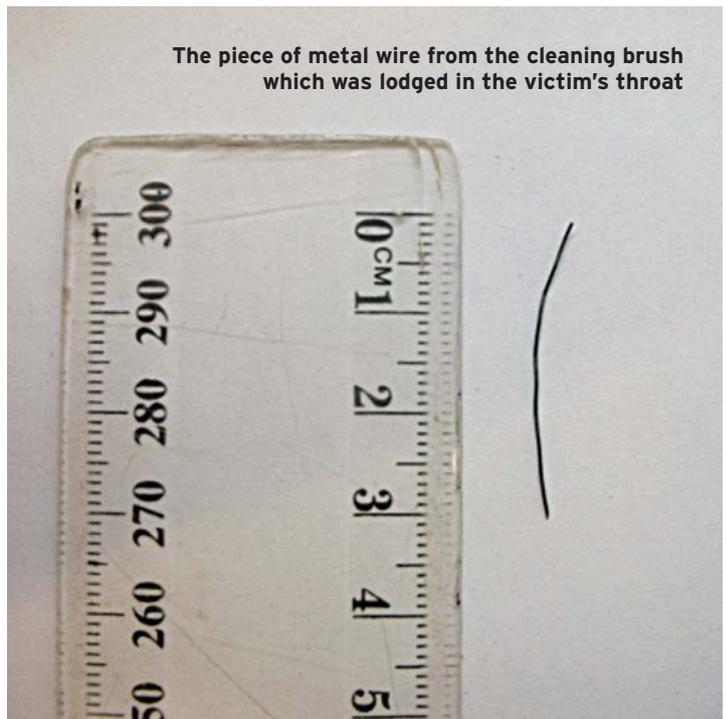
The Council's Environmental Health Unit was contacted by the victim after he was discharged from hospital. The Council Officers conducted an investigation at the food business and established the metal wire originated as a bristle from a brush used to clean the stone pizza oven. The stone oven surface is regularly cleaned during trade to remove pizza topping ingredients that have cooked to the stone base surface and a bristle from the cleaning brush broke off during a clean. A pizza was placed directly on top of the stone base inside the oven, with the bristle subsequently being cooked into the dough and consumed by the victim.

The investigation revealed a lack of procedures implemented at the premises to prevent physical contamination. The investigating Officer established that the premises had not replaced the cleaning brush since the food business opened early 2012 and that there were no regular visual checks or replacement procedure to ensure equipment was in good working order.

To prevent recurrence of contamination by bristles from cleaning brushes the food business implemented the following-

1. the use of a cleaning brush with bristles made from natural fibres which if break quickly cook to ash inside oven.
2. where a metal wire brush is used a procedure where staff routinely inspect the equipment for signs of deterioration and inspect the inside of the oven for potential signs of physical contamination.
3. a scheme or record to document employee inspection and actions undertaken.
4. routinely replace the cleaning equipment as recommended by the manufacturer or depending on level of use.

In sentencing, the Magistrate was mindful that DOC Mornington Pty Ltd had undertaken process, procedural and equipment changes to prevent recurrence of physical contamination. However, a lack of procedures to prevent contamination at the time of the offence in conjunction with the severe impact on the victim justified a serious penalty.



The piece of metal wire from the cleaning brush which was lodged in the victim's throat



Pizza placed in the oven

## Your EHPA Contact Directory

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## Get to know the EHPA Board Members

**Name:** Nick Lund

**Position with EHPA:** President and Board Member

**Current Employer:** Boroondara City Council

**Position:** Coordinator Public Health & Municipal Recovery Manager

**Qualifications:** B Hlth Sc (Enviro Hlth Mgt), Grad Cert Occ Hlth, Grad Cert Mgt, currently completing a MBA

**Contact Email Address:** nicholas.lund@ehpa.org.au



**How long have you been involved with EHPA?** 13 years. I began my involvement as a student representative on the Branch Council of AIEH (Vic) in 2001.

**What attracted you to join the Board of EHPA?** I have a passion for the profession and I am keen to improve its standing. Being on the Board allows me to work with like minded colleagues on initiatives that support our members and provide advocacy on their behalf to State and Commonwealth Governments.

**What attracted you to the Environmental Health profession?** The variety, the challenges and the people.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?** Problem solving and leadership.

**What advice would you offer to Environmental Health students or recent graduates?** Immerse yourselves in everything environmental health and become involved with EHPA through the CPD program, the SIGs, Regional Groups or even the Board.

**What do you do in your spare time?** I have a 8 month old, Christopher James, who is keeping me pretty busy at the moment. I am also studying for my MBA, sessional lecturing at Swinburne University and a specialist reservist (Environmental Health Officer) Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Air Force.

**Name:** James Maw

**Position with EHPA:** Vice President

**Current Employer:** Ehpic Consulting Group

**Position:** Director/Senior Consultant

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Public Health (Environmental Health)

**Contact Email Address:** jmaw@ehpic.com.au



**How long have you been involved with EHPA?** Since EHPA was formed in 2012 and on the former State Branch Council of EHA for many years prior as a board director, SIG Convenor and newsletter editor.

**What attracted you to join the Board of EHPA?** Initially the attraction was to challenge myself outside of my normal professional responsibilities as an EHP. These days I remain part of the EHPA leadership group because I am passionate about improving the environmental health profession in Australia.

**What attracted you to the Environmental Health profession?** I fell into it at 18 and just stuck around!

**What do you enjoy most about your job?** Being able to work with such a variety of individuals across the many different facets of the EH profession.

**What advice would you offer to Environmental Health students or recent graduates?** Look outside of the square! Many individuals put the blinkers on and see the only work in environmental health is the role of an EHP working within local government. The industry is bigger than that and new graduates need to be prepared to step outside of their comfort zones.

**What do you do in your spare time?** What is this spare time thing about? When I get a little spare time I try to keep up with my very active 18 month old girl.

**Name:** David Esmore

**Position with EHPA:** Board member

**Current Employer:** Baw Baw Shire

**Position:** Environmental Health Officer

**Qualifications:** Dip PH

**Contact Email Address:** david.esmore@ehpa.org.au

**How long have you been involved with EHPA?** Since it was formed.

**What attracted you to join the Board of EHPA?**

I wanted to ensure the organization was able to be the type that members expected and provided the services needed.

**What attracted you to the Environmental Health profession?** The variety of duties and to be able to make a difference in public health.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?** The potential for no day to be the same.

**What advice would you offer to Environmental Health students or recent graduates?** The job may not be what you expect initially but be willing to learn. Ask questions of your work colleagues. Get involved in SIGs and Regional groups. These are good learning and networking opportunities.

**What do you do in your spare time?** I only work three days a week as I am semi-retired. I go mountain bike riding every Saturday morning for a couple of hours with a group of guys. October to May I help run "sailing for all abilities" one day a week. There are also two or three days a month where I am involved with day-away programs for primary school children to places like Phillip Island.



**Name:** Will Carroll

**Position with EHPA:** Board member, Convener Student and New Graduate SIG, Secretary Aboriginal Health SIG

**Current Employer:** City of Boroondara

**Position:** Environmental Health Officer

**Qualifications:** Bachelor of Health Science (Public and Environmental Health)

**Contact Email Address:**

will.carroll@boroondara.vic.gov.au



**How long have you been involved with EHPA?** 2 years

**What attracted you to join the Board of EHPA?** The idea that I could have input into improving the profession and in turn the health of the community.

**What attracted you to the Environmental Health profession?** I have always been of the belief that we should all make our time here Earth count, this way I can channel my energies into something positive which I believe helps me to leave this place in a better way than I found it for all. Although I acknowledge I may not have the ability to make improvements on a large scale, I believe every person who has a positive attitude and drive to challenge and change things for the better is one smaller step towards a greater place for us all to live.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?** Engaging with the members of the community on a daily basis and negotiating positive outcomes for all the community and Council. It is rewarding to come to the conclusion of an investigation or project and know that my actions have made a difference to someone.

**What advice would you offer to Environmental Health students or recent graduates?** To those who have employment in the industry already - Put your hand up for projects and extra training. Blitz your targets. Be proactive. Don't just go through the motions but be a trailblazer. To those seeking employment in the industry - Get involved in EHPA. Join a SIG. Put your hand up for projects within that SIG. Show your passion for the profession there is too much competition from highly skilled professionals for you to be complacent. Make yourself attractive to employers.

**What do you do in your spare time?** I am involved with EHPA in a number of volunteer capacities, I am also a volunteer for Indigenous Community Volunteers. In my personal life I enjoy spending time with family and friends, going to the gym, bushwalking, getting away and meditation and usually have a pretty full schedule.

### Victoria's Food Audit System Changes

**Garry Smith**

**Program Manager Food Safety and Regulation  
Department of Health**

The Victorian Food Act 1984 was substantially amended in 2009. The changes were implemented in 3 stages commencing in July 2010. The revised arrangements for food safety audit were explained to councils and auditors in 2010.

The Department of Health held a forum with the auditors on 8th May 2013 at which auditors were presented with a new version of the Auditors Handbook.

A notable change with the new handbook is that it contains forms for auditors to use when completing audits under the Act. The forms cover the full range of scenarios (full compliance, corrective notices required when non-compliance has been identified, and re-audit outcomes).

Auditors must use these forms from 5 August 2013. It is anticipated that these standard processes will -

- promote greater consistency in how auditors conduct food safety audits for the purpose of the Food Act,
- encourage more communication between auditors and council EHOs; and
- ensure councils have adequate information about the outcome of audits, including the nature of any non-compliance that is detected by an auditor.

The processes cover:

- what must be considered during an audit;
- when a corrective action notice must be issued to a proprietor;
- when a council must be notified about a non-conformance;
- when a certificate can be issued by an auditor indicating that a food premises is complaint;
- the way in which non-compliance is to be recorded in a certificate for the proprietor and council.

To reinforce the importance of that communication Ms Suzanne Walker from the City of Greater Bendigo gave a presentation to the auditors at the recent forum on a case study where the lack of communication between an auditor and the Bendigo council resulted in a food business being assessed by both parties only weeks apart with very different assessments of compliance with the Food Act.

The revised handbook clarifies the role of auditors and councils under the Act in relation to audits.

The significance of the role of council as the registration authority was explained to auditors at the forum.

The Auditors Handbook will be formally launched for council EHOs at the department's Health Protection forum on 20th August 2013. Guidance will be provided to councils about the handbook. A link to the handbook will also be sent to all councils shortly.

Facts about the audit provisions of the Food Act that EHOs need to know now include:

- Only department approved food safety auditor can audit for the purposes of the Food Act 1984
- A food business is responsible for ensuring it engages the services of a food safety auditor who has been approved under the Food Act by the department. If they want an audit to be recognised for the purposes of the Act. It is also the responsibility of the business to ensure that the auditor has the relevant scope (if relevant) for their business. That is if a cook chill process operates at the premises then the auditor is required to have the cook chill scope on their certification.

A list of approved food safety auditors is maintained on the food safety website at all times. All approved food safety auditors are granted a certificate of approval from the department and should be able to produce that to an authorised officer (or food business) upon request.

From April 2014 all approved auditors will also be issued with an identification card.

- Respond immediately if notified by the auditor of a serious risk of food being sold that is unsafe or unsuitable ("critical non-conformance").
  - Ideally the council will respond within 24 hours of the notification from the auditor; and
  - Council should take any necessary action, if required, to close out the non-conformance.
- Respond in a reasonable timeframe if notified by the auditor under section 19(4)(b) of the Act that there are other non-conformances identified (that do not pose a serious risk of food being sold that is unsafe or unsuitable).
- Councils will be advised shortly about what steps to take if they have concerns about the actions of an auditor.

The department looks forward to explaining the new handbook to EHOs at the Health Protection Forum. Should you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Gary Smith at the department by telephone on 9096 5211 or by email [garry.smith@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:garry.smith@health.vic.gov.au).

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### Getting a Foot in the Door

**David Thomas**

**Environmental Health Officer**

January 1974. Having been awarded the Royal Society for Health Diploma for Health Inspectors I decided I needed to get a "foot in the door" on my way to being a Health Inspector. One of the first jobs I applied for was that of a Health/Building/General Inspector (Weeds and Vermin, dog catcher, Parking Inspector) with a South Australian Riverland Council. In small rural Councils this was not unusual in the early nineteen seventies. Some Health Inspectors in small rural Councils managed also the local Livestock Sale Yards. At the time, in South Australia, positions for persons to work only as a Health Inspector were rarely advertised.

In applying for the Riverland job I realised that if I was offered the position I would be committed to ongoing correspondence studies for three years for the RSH Diploma in Meat and other Foods, three and a half years for the Local Government Building Inspectors Qualifying Certificate (LGBIQC) plus, the six month course for a Weeds and Vermin Certificate. At the end of each year I would have to satisfy

the offices of the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Health that I had made satisfactory progress in my studies. I was young and I had nothing to lose. I was willing to try anything to get a foot in the door.

I was invited to the Riverland for an interview on a Saturday morning in mid-February. I can remember it was a hot February day and I left my family at the town swimming pool whilst I changed into my suit, shirt and tie in the change rooms. The Council offices were in the median strip in the main street in town. As I sat in the reception area and waited for my interview, my gaze kept returning to a mark half way up the wall opposite me that indicated the 1956 flood level of the River Murray. I was thinking; do I really want this job?

The interview was friendly enough but there were two things that threw me. The first question was, "What position do you play in football"? I had made no reference in my application to playing football and so I told the Panel, it was more than four years since I last played football and it was unlikely I would ever play again. The second question was, "Would you consider taking a six hundred dollar

## Getting a Foot in the Door (continued)

reduction in salary in the first year whilst you get your Weeds and Vermin Certificate"? I did a quick calculation and told the panel I would be earning two hundred dollars a year less than my current salary and I would rather not do that. I did not get the job.

Some years later in the Northern Territory I met the officer who had resigned from the Riverland job I applied for. I told him about being asked in the interview what position I played in football. He laughed and said, "You should have told them you were a ruckman, the footy club was in real trouble when I left the town and they were desperate for players".

My next interview was with the Metropolitan County board (MCB) in Adelaide. The MCB were the Food Authority for fourteen metropolitan councils. The Board comprised of a Secretary Ron Boucher and one Councillor from each of the fourteen participating Councils. Including the Assistant Secretary Ron Turner, also a Health inspector, there were six other Health inspectors and an Administrative assistant. Following an interview with the Secretary and the Chairman of the Board I was offered a position as a Health Inspector and commenced work with the Board in May 1974. My continued employment would be contingent on my reporting to the Minister for Health at the end of each year that I had made satisfactory progress in my studies for the RSH Diploma in Meat and Other Foods. As employees of the Board we were responsible for the inspection of all food premises, food related complaints and other food business matters within our allotted council areas. I was given the responsibility for the Glenelg, Burnside, Unley

and Brighton Council areas.

My first inspection on my first day as a Health Inspector almost resulted in me being locked up on a criminal charge of breaking and entry. Accompanied by a Senior Inspector, Sean Dawes, we went to a Chinese Restaurant on Greenhill Road to do a follow up of a "dirty premises notice". When we knocked on the back door, the door creaked open and when no one answered our "Hello any one there" we went inside the building. We walked around the kitchen the bar area the dining room and even checked out the toilets calling out "Hello, Hello, anyone there" but could find no one on the premises. We both made comments about how strange this was.

After a brief look around the kitchen and Sean telling me the place was much cleaner than on his previous visit we headed for the back door only to find our exit blocked by two very large Police Officers. The Police had been sent to the premises by a security firm who had a "back to base" alarm system on the back door. We were in the middle of explaining to the Police who we were and why we were there and how we got into the building when one of the owners arrived. The owner told the Police that the lock on the door sometimes jammed and although the door was closed it was not always locked and needed only to be pushed to be opened. The Police officers shook their heads in disbelief, told the owner to get the lock fixed and much to our relief left the scene.

"Getting a foot in the door" had a whole different meaning that day.

## Discovering RIAMS - Generating efficiencies for Kernow

**Sean La Fontaine**  
**Business Development Manager**  
**Kernow Environmental Solutions**

As a provider of Environmental Health and Immunisation services across a number of Councils in Victoria, Kernow faces many operational and logistical challenges. The most common of these are keeping more than 50 staff up-to-date with best practice standards, providing current information on Environmental Health issues and delivering support at all times in any place, across every area of Environmental Health. All this whilst ensuring we provide a clear, consistent message.

Unfortunately, we do not have an additional EHO or two at each of our Councils who can solely focus on the maintenance of important procedures, documents (including letters and legal notices) legislation, best practice standards, relevant news items and so on. Our budget does not extend that far and we constantly have to do more with less. Sound familiar?

When I was in the UK in 2011 representing Kernow at a CIEH (the UK professional body) conference I came across RIAMS - the Regulatory Information and Management System. I quickly discovered this was a system that could help Kernow deliver relevant information as well as standardised documents and procedures to all staff members at each of our different Council's across a range of disciplines. With a strong focus on providing our EHO's with field technology (i.e. tablets) to perform their roles, it was clear that RIAMS was a support tool that could provide help without staff having to be in the office as well as enabling greater consistency.

Even Kernow's most experienced EHO's cannot know everything at all times. With unique issues or tasks that don't regularly present themselves in the day-to-day operation of our roles, it is important to have a resource that can be easily accessed with current information on how to resolve an issue. An example of this was the recent discovery of a clandestine laboratory by an EHO investigating a complaint. The EHO referred to the relevant process under RIAMS and was able to follow the step-by-step instructions on how to begin handling an issue of this type. A template Improvement



Notice was also available on RIAMS for the EHO to access immediately ensuring that quick and appropriate action was taken.

There were concerns that despite the large amount of synergies and efficiencies that can be made between Councils by using the same set of processes there would still be a need for individual Council flexibility. There needed to be the ability to edit, replace and completely remove information that was either not relevant to each Council or that required the use of their own bespoke processes. RIAMS provided the flexibility for this to happen for each of our Councils. At each of our Councils we have personalised aspects of RIAMS to provide EHO's with information and local knowledge relevant to their municipality - not one size fits all!

Having RIAMS has allowed our staff to focus less on maintaining procedures and keeping abreast of all things Environmental Health; this is managed by our own dedicated Content Manager. In terms of meeting the requirements of auditors and risk assessments; RIAMS provides a current and comprehensive resource base. From an IT perspective; RIAMS is in the cloud and therefore does not require any set up or integration PLUS it is a fully encrypted site (the same security as a bank which means no one else can access your content).

As a one stop shop for our Environmental Health information and knowledge management needs, RIAMS has delivered a range of practical benefits to both our large and small Councils. It's been a cost effective way for Kernow to be at the front of best practice methodologies at all times.

Sean La Fontaine is an EHO and Business Development Manager for Kernow Environmental Services P/L.

For more information on RIAMS go to [www.riamsau.org](http://www.riamsau.org) or contact Sean on 0400 904 157 / [sean@kernow.net.au](mailto:sean@kernow.net.au) to arrange a demonstration.

## Clandestine Laboratory Notification

**Jade Harris**  
**Environmental Health Officer**  
**Brimbank City Council**

Brimbank City Council's Environmental Health Department received notification by Police Officers from the Brimbank Crime Investigation unit that a Clandestine Lab had been discovered in a mezzanine room within a panel beating business in the Brimbank industrial area. As part of the Clandestine Lab procedure Environmental Health Officers attended the site and made observations and obtained information from the front boundary with Police.

A Prohibition Notice was issued and posted on the front door of the premises prohibiting any persons from entering until specified conditions were met including engaging an Occupational hygienist to

make an assessment of the site and to have the area professionally cleansed. The Prohibition Notice was issued to the property owner as Council had difficulties in contacting the tenant.

Approximately 200-300L of chemicals was seized by Police investigators as well an assortment of lab equipment.

An assessment was made by the Occupational Hygienist and samples were taken from the premises as directed in the Prohibition Notice issued by Brimbank Council. The results indicated no likelihood of any leaching outside the mezzanine room. The estimated costs for remediation works is approximately \$60,000. Brimbank City Council's Environmental Health Department is currently working with the Police and the property owner to ensure compliance with the Prohibition Notice.

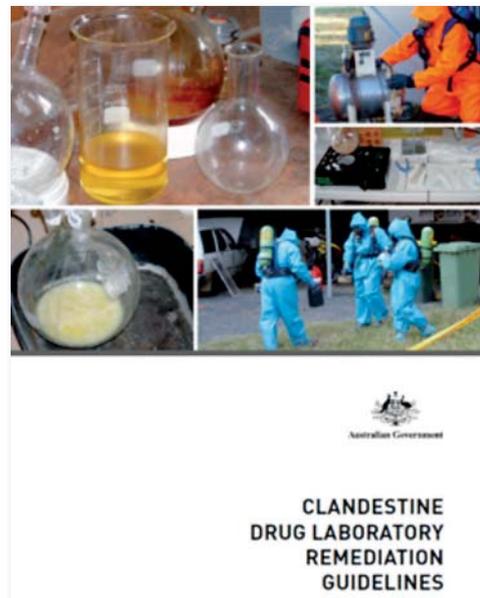
## Facts on Clandestine Laboratories

### Information taken from the Australian Crime Commission

Impact: Irrespective of their size or level of sophistication, clandestine laboratories are not a victimless crime. Clandestine laboratories present major environmental, social, health and economic threats to Australia including:

- potentially fatal fires or explosions
- properties left uninhabitable due to chemical contamination
- environmental risks from dumping dangerous chemicals and residues in drains, rivers, public parks and on roadsides—for every kilo of pure methylamphetamine produced, up to 10 kilograms of hazardous and toxic waste is created
- potential exposure to toxic chemicals that constitute a major health risk
- increased basis for organised crime to profit
- increased investment in time and resources by law enforcement.

Regardless of their size, the residual contamination arising from illicit drug manufacture presents a serious risk to human and environmental health. In 2011, the Australian Government launched the Clandestine Drug Laboratory Remediation Guidelines in recognition of the hazardous nature of clandestine laboratories.



## Number of Clandestine Laboratory detections, by state and territory, 2002-03 to 2011-12

| Year    | NSW | VIC | QLD | SA | WA  | TAS | NT | ACT | TOTAL |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|----|-----|-------|
| 2002-03 | 47  | 19  | 171 | 34 | 36  | 2   | 3  | 2   | 314   |
| 2003-04 | 61  | 20  | 189 | 48 | 33  | 1   | 6  | 0   | 358   |
| 2004-05 | 45  | 31  | 209 | 25 | 44  | 3   | 21 | 3   | 381   |
| 2005-06 | 55  | 47  | 161 | 50 | 58  | 5   | 12 | 2   | 390   |
| 2006-07 | 49  | 72  | 132 | 51 | 37  | 9   | 1  | 5   | 356   |
| 2007-08 | 51  | 76  | 121 | 69 | 30  | 2   | 1  | 6   | 356   |
| 2008-09 | 67  | 84  | 148 | 65 | 78  | 0   | 7  | 0   | 449   |
| 2009-10 | 82  | 113 | 297 | 71 | 118 | 1   | 12 | 0   | 694   |
| 2010-11 | 87  | 63  | 293 | 75 | 171 | 11  | 2  | 1   | 703   |
| 2011-12 | 90  | 99  | 379 | 58 | 160 | 15  | 7  | 1   | 809   |

In 2011-12:

- 70.6 per cent of clandestine laboratories were detected in residential areas
- The majority of clandestine laboratories detected were small addict-based laboratories (less than 50 grams per production cycle).

Statistics taken from Australian Crime Commission- Clandestine Laboratories and Precursors fact sheet

## 2013 Symposium at Cape Schanck

If you were fortunate enough to attend this year's Symposium, I am sure you will agree that it was thoroughly worth the trip to Cape Schanck. With outstanding speakers and a very diverse program, it was no surprise that the Symposium was fully booked out prior to the event. As with our previous conference at Cape Schanck ten years ago, the accommodation was excellent, the views spectacular and it did stop raining sometimes. With over 140 attendees over the two days, plus our sponsors and speakers it was an event not to be missed. Highlights of the Symposium were the keynote presentation by Frank Connolly on Day 1 and the keynote presentation by Abdi Aden on Day 2, as some of you will be aware, Abdi was in the second series of "Go back to where you came from" so his perspective on what it is like to be a refugee was fascinating to listen to.

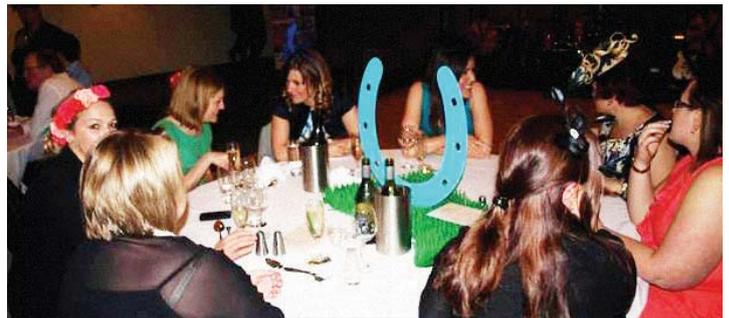
Of course we can't talk about the Symposium without mentioning the Dinner Dance, with this year's theme being "Fashions on the Field", you can imagine some of the wonderful (and not so wonderful) outfits delegates came up with. The winner of the Men's Section was Jeremy Draper and for the Ladies Section, the winner was Pauline Porter.

We would especially like to thank our sponsors who always support us, especially the Department of Health as our Principal Sponsor.

As a lot of very tired, but happy EHO's made their way back home, the next big question is "Where will we hold the next Symposium?" Any volunteers!!!



A full house at the Symposium as it is opened by Graeme Gillespie, Director Health Protection, Department of Health



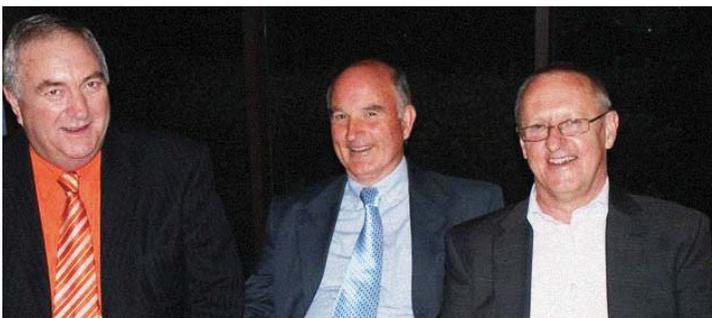
Good food, good company, what more could you ask for!



Nick Lund, EHPA President on the first day of the Symposium



Maria Macri, M & K Lawyers congratulates Jeremy Draper on his Fashions on the Field win



Andrew Mackintosh - Latrobe City Council, Ross Cairns - Rural City of Wangaratta & Rodney Roberts - Maribyrnong City Council enjoying a quiet moment



End of the day at a workshop and everyone is still awake and concentrating!



Delegates uniting at the McArthur Trade Display



Networking during breaks

### EHPA Annual Awards

This year the Awards were presented at the Dinner dance and the winners were:

**Will Carroll** - TGO Jordan Award for the Best Performing Final Year Swinburne University Student 2012  
Bachelor of Health Science (Public and Environmental Health)

**Talia Stevens** - Keith W Magee Award for the Best Performing Final Year Latrobe University Student 2012  
Bachelor of Public Health (Environmental Health)

**Gavin Colgan** - James C Smith Award for the Best Performing Postgraduate Student Environmental Health, Latrobe University 2012

**Guiliano Marcon** - 2013 Young Environmental Health Professional

Congratulations to all of you and best wishes for the future.

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### Admitted to Membership as of 20th March 2013

#### Student Member

Kameljeet Kaur  
Matthew Chambers  
Gavin DeKlerk  
Natalie Walker

#### Upgraded from Student to Graduate Member

Will Carroll                      City of Boroondara

#### Graduate Member

Alana Nolen                      Mildura Rural City Council

#### Upgraded from Associate Member to Member

Carolyn Anderson

#### Member

|                  |                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sarah Duggan     | Moreland City Council              |
| Felicity Edwards | Hobart City Council                |
| Becky Harman     | Mornington Peninsula Shire Council |
| John Devries     | Kingborough Council                |
| Elliot Roberts   | Department of Health               |

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Please submit all contributions to:

#### Newsletter Editor

Suzanne Walker  
newsletter@ehpa.org.au

If you have an article for the next edition, the final date for submission is 30th November 2013.