



FCMA

Federation of Chinese Medicine &
Acupuncture Societies of Australia Ltd

澳洲全國中醫藥針灸學會聯合會

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Newsletter September 2019

Greetings to all members!

The Federation of Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Societies of Australia, FCMA (referred to below as "the federation"), held its 2019 Annual General Meeting together with the symposium "Development and Exchange in Chinese Medicine" in Sydney on September 8th 2019. This was also the 8th general assembly meeting of the federation. Special guests attending the opening ceremony included Ms Gladys Liu, the first Chinese-born woman to be elected as a Member of the House of Representatives in the federal government, Dr David Graham, CMBA Deputy Chair, Ms Debra Gillick, CMBA Executive Officer, and Prof Qu Xian Qin from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). The AGM was chaired by Dr Kevin Chang, vice-president of FCMA and president of the NSW Association of Chinese Medicine. FCMA president, Prof Tzi Chiang Lin, gave a welcome address and presented a report on the federation's activities for 2018-19, noting:

1. Following the General Assembly meeting in Melbourne in August 2018, the Federation focused on gaining provider recognition from the two remaining health insurance companies that had not yet granted recognition. FCMA finally received formal confirmation of NIB's recognition in January this year, back-dated to 1st January.
2. The Federation spares no effort in fighting for the rights of its members and of the Chinese medicine community. The Federation drafted 17 proposals in the past year, including requests to the Department of Health to amend the relevant legislation to incorporate Chinese medicine into the Chronic Disease Management (CDM) scheme and to provide veterans and their families funded services of a registered acupuncturist under the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) scheme.
3. On 7th December 2018, Prof Lin and the FCMA executive officer, Dr Sherman Gu met with the federal health department's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Professor Brendan Murphy. We discussed in depth the admission of Chinese medicine and acupuncture into the CDM and DVA systems, and through Professor Murphy, submitted a folio of the most recent scientific evidence of acupuncture effectiveness in the treatment of chronic pain to the federal Department of Health.
4. On 16th July, FCMA directors from Victoria and Victorian branch committee members met the first Chinese-born woman elected to the house of representatives, Ms Gladys Liu, whom we hope will be the voice of the Chinese medicine profession to the government and the health minister. She has also assisted our federation in submitting a proposal to the Minister for Health requesting that Chinese medicine be incorporated into the CDM scheme.
5. As this year's rotational member representing Chinese medicine profession in Australia, FCMA sent a representative to each of the three meetings of the Professions Reference Group (PRG) setup by AHPRA, participating in discussions on common issues affecting all health professions. We also responded to a number of consultations affecting the health profession.

At the symposium there was a high standard of presentations by experienced practitioners offering academic and clinical exchange, covering professional issues, diagnostic methods of both Chinese medicine and Western medicine, information on the development of new Chinese herbal medicines, and the exchange of clinical experience in the practice of acupuncture. Participants reported that the symposium had enabled them to broaden their horizons, deepen their knowledge and make many acquaintances. The AGM and symposium were hosted by the New South Wales branch of the federation, the NSW Association of Chinese Medicine.

At the 8th meeting of the FCMA Assembly held at noon, the national president, Prof Tzi Chiang Lin presented his report on the work of the federation, and reports were also presented by the New South Wales branch president, Dr Kevin Chang, the Queensland branch president Dr Song Yun He, South Australia branch president Dr Fang Liang, West Australia branch president Dr Qin Wang, and ACT president Dr Hai Song Wang.

The secretary-general, Dr Chi Jing Liu, presented FCMA's financial report on behalf of the treasurer, Dr Lawrence Yao, who was on leave. (At the Mid-autumn Festival gala dinner hosted in the evening by the NSW Association of Chinese Medicine, Dr Liu also reported on how the federation fought for the rights and interests of FCMA members and the whole Chinese medicine community).

The Executive Officer, Dr Sherman Gu, reported on the work of the secretariat, informing members that in response to a letter from the federal Health Department, the secretariat had prepared an application to the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) in July 2019, seeking to include registered acupuncturists in the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). Before submitting the application, in the overall interests of the Chinese medicine profession, we invited the other two Chinese medicine professional associations to co-sign but they declined. Since consensus has not yet been reached by the whole profession, further development of the submission is, for the moment, temporarily on hold, and will be resumed later at the appropriate time.

On October 11th 2018, we responded to the public consultation put out by the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) titled "The regulation of Australia's health professions: Keeping the National Law up to date and fit for purpose", where we proposed that the existing law should be amended so that non-registered acupuncturists could not evade regulation by using the term "dry needling". FCMA was the only professional association to submit on this topic.

FCMA representatives were invited by the CMBA to attend the inaugural meeting of Chinese medicine associations on May 10th this year in Sydney. FCMA was the only association to request further discussion on access to Medicare and DVA, and to seek CMBA support to oppose dry needling.

The secretary of the FCMA, Dr Donna Chew, spoke to delegates about the operations of the FCMA secretariat and the latest situation regarding qualification requirements set by an insurance company. In order to accommodate that work, the FCMA board resolved to establish a "Policy and Communications Committee" within the secretariat.



Prof Tzi Chiang Lin presenting his report



FCMA vice president, Dr Kevin Chang, presiding over the opening ceremony and symposium



Guests and federation directors and members at the AGM and symposium



Ms Gladys Liu, guests, sponsors and federation officials



Presentation of appreciation to Dr David Graham, and Ms Debra Gillick



FCMA officials and committee members of NSW Association of Chinese Medicine

Compiled by Secretariat of FCMA

18 September 2019