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FEATURE : CONFERENCE REPORT

Clinicians Medical Education Convention Aotearoa

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Jared was the convenor of the 2006 Clinicians Medical Education Convention Aotearoa. James is currently studying in Christchurch.

Convention Report : The first annual CLINICIANS Medical Education Convention Aotearoa (MECA'06) was held in Dunedin over the weekend of 15th-17th September last year. I am pleased to announce that this inaugural medical students' convention was a huge success and the precedent has been set for this to continue on as an annual event in the years to come.

Over the course of the weekend more than 150 clinical and pre-clinical medical students from around Australasia attended lectures and special presentations, participated in a series of practical and ethical workshops and, celebrated together at two social events designed to encourage collegiality in medicine. This was just the third time that a full convention had been held for New Zealand medical students with the previous events being held in 1975 and 1991.

The special topic for last year's event was 'Baa Baa Black Sheep - Rural Health The Forgotten Realm'. As part of this special topic Drs Pat Farry and Stuart Gowland presented on the current poor state of rural health in New Zealand which included a live video link up to a rural general practitioner in southern New Zealand via technology provided by Mobile Surgical Services Ltd. Also as part of this event, the Matagouri Rural Health Club hosted rural secondary school students from around the greater Otago region to promote the benefits of pursuing careers as rural health professionals.

Other Highlights of the event included a presentation on the 'Health Workforce Crisis' by Professor Des Gorman, Dean of the Auckland Medical School, an after dinner speech by surgeon scientist and author, the Emeritus Professor Graham Hill, and an entertaining semi-formal debate that featured the Honourable Pete Hodgson, Minister of Health.



The feedback I received both at and after the event has all been extremely positive and I sincerely hope that this groundswell of support will carry over to this year's event which has the potential to be even bigger and better.

Organising an event such as this was no small task, but what made the event such an outstanding success was the enthusiasm and commitment for medicine that was brought to the event by delegates, speakers, sponsors and other invited guests alike. The MECA'06 organising committee would like acknowledge the support of all those people that made this event possible and invite you all to make the journey to MECA in 2007.

MECA'07 will again be held in Dunedin at the Dunedin Town Hall over the weekend 28-30 September. The catch phrase is "Here's to the Future..." Distinguished key note speakers include: Professor Mike Ardagh (Emergency Medicine), Professor Des Gorman (Submarine and Diving Medicine) and, special guest, Shawn Riley from the Mayo clinic in America, who will be speaking on patient medication verification initiatives. Delegates will also be able to learn and master their suturing skills in one of the 4 clinical workshops offered. The Convention will include 2 social functions, a highlight being the Medical Challenge, featuring the Honourable David Benson-Pope.

For further information and registration go to www.otago.ac.nz or, any queries please contact Kerry Harlow (Convenor MECA'07) harke742@student.otago.ac.nz