This issue of Communiqué is brought to you by our NSW/ACT colleagues.

**From our NSW/ACT Branch Chair**

Hi, I’m Kirsty Musgrave and I am the chair of the RSA NSW/ACT Branch. I have had an active role in the RSA both at a branch and federal level and have been the branch chairperson since August 2016. Currently I am working as the Renal Clinical Nurse Consultant at St Vincent’s Hospital in Sydney. I am supported by a dedicated branch committee of Jenny Lawrence, Lisa Paquin, Perambalam (Pera) Pattabhirama and Khin Myint.

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**From our Board President**

Dear Members,

On behalf of the RSA Board, I would like to extend a big thank you and congratulations to everyone who helped make the 2017 RSA Annual Conference a huge success! In particular we acknowledge the hard work of the volunteer Conference Committee led by Convenor Debbie Pugh and assisted by Pera Pattabhiraman, Debbie Knagge, Lyn Brown, Bronwyn Hayes, Ann Bonner, and Kirsten Passaris. Also a big thank you and congratulations to the Scientific Committee, led by Bronwyn Hayes, for their hard work selecting abstracts and planning the sessions.

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As the 2017 national conference was held in Sydney the committee has focused on providing education for members in the form of education evenings. These have been held at various hospitals around Sydney and have been well attended by members. Topics covered in these meetings have included heart failure and renal impairment, modern practices and future directions for the renal patient, vascular access (use of ultrasound and interventions), and the management of Central Venous Catheters (CVC) in dialysis patients. There are two further evenings planned for September and November.

I would like to thank the 2017 Conference Organising Committee for their hard work and commitment; the conference was a great success and demonstrated the work that is going on within the renal community. I would also like to thank those members who have contributed to this issue and I hope you enjoy these articles from NSW and ACT.

Regards
Kirsty Musgrave
RSA NSW/ACT Branch Chair

The conference attracted over 530 delegates from Australia, New Zealand and beyond, and provided a fantastic range of educational and networking opportunities for delegates, speakers and exhibitors. We acknowledge and extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors and exhibitors for their generous support, as well as the presenters who shared their knowledge and experience so freely.

We would also like to congratulate our award winners. Please see a complete list of winners further in Communiqué. They are to be commended on their significant contribution to renal care and to the RSA.

A big congratulations must go to Dr Bronwyn Hayes who this year won the RSA Award for her commitment, hard work and dedication within the RSA. Of course, not to forget all the other nominees for the awards, all of whom have shown ongoing commitment and dedication to the RSA. A full list of nominees is in this issue of Communiqué.

Finally, we would like to thank all delegates, presenters, industry partners and conference organisers Association Professionals, all of whom helped make the conference one to remember.

Annual General Meeting: Held during the conference this year’s annual general meeting provided an update on the overall status of the RSA. Membership growth was noted with 1920 active members recorded at this time. The 2017 Annual Report was made available to all members.

The AGM also saw the farewell and thank you to departing board members Pete Sinclair, Karen Mills and Tiffany Whittington - Thank you. The RSA board also welcomed Dr Leanne Brown. Leanne comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Finally, don’t forget to make a note of the dates for our 2018 RSA Annual Conference in Adelaide June 21-23rd 2018. The theme for the conference is “Lighting the path to success.”

In closing, I would like to pass on our sincere thanks – on behalf of all RSA members – to the army of volunteers who have and continue to contribute to making the RSA what it is today.

Kind regards,
Fiona Donnelly
RSA Board President
Being part of the RSA conference convening committee has enabled me to develop my skills professionally and personally in many ways; but the culmination was the sense of achievement gained from being part of the RSA organisation. I am proud to say I was part of the organising committee for 2017 which was able to deliver yet another great conference. I will admit to being enormously outside my comfort zone, especially just prior to the opening of the conference and I was even trying to give this job away, even at the eleventh hour. Standing in front of some 500 delegates made my knees quake and my stomach do double somersaults and some. However I did it and survived, and have grown from this experience. There are many ways members can volunteer within the RSA at a branch and national level. It is a great way to build your network and also to gain some valuable skills and support. I would highly recommend putting your hand up for one of the positions available and also to be involved in other ways at the conference such as chairing a session or even chairing a local branch education evening. The RSA organisation cannot grow without its army of volunteers, so I would like to take this opportunity to not only thank those that were on this year’s organising committee; Debbie Knagge, Perambalam Pattabhiraman, Ann Bonner, Bronwyn Hayes, Lynn Brown, Kirsten Passaris and Fiona Donnelly, but to also extend my sincere thanks to all of our volunteers. Thank-you.

Debbie Pugh
RSA Board Director
RSA Conference Convenor 2017.

We are having a little makeover!

We are very excited to announce that Communique and the RSA e-newsletter are about to get a little bit of TLC! Designed to be a bit more user friendly, to give you our members easy, direct, quick access to all the information you need at your fingertips. Launching later this year our new look newsletter, Communique Plus will feature all the stories and news you love, plus events, education and more. Each edition will feature member spotlights and local news, be sure to share your stories with our editor.
RSA Award
This prestigious award recognises those individuals who have made an outstanding contribution and commitment to the RSA and renal communities at a local and/or Australasian level.
Recipients:
- New South Wales / ACT – Tanya Smolongov
- New Zealand: - Balaji Jagannathan
- Queensland – Sally Carpenter
- South Australia / Northern Territory – Christine Russell
- Victoria – Siew Eng Foo
- Western Australia – Lois Johnston

Federal Award
The Federal RSA Award winner is chosen by a sub-committee from individual branch and federal nominations.

2017 RSA Award winner is Dr Bronwyn Hayes.
Bronwyn has been a renal nurse since 1998 working in haemodialysis and transplantation were her main focus is on providing evidence-based health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders particularly those who live in remote locations. She has been instrumental in improving the access to transplantation for patients in Far North Queensland. She has led the Queensland Statewide Renal Clinical Network sponsored disaster project to develop a natural disaster plan for all the renal units in Queensland. In this role she drew on her experience of being the only renal nurse who was responsible for over 50 patients who were evacuated during Cyclone Larry. She published an account of this experience in the RSA journal Bronwyn is committed to the development of other renal nurses supporting those working in isolated renal units in Cape York. She also supports remote area nurses who care for dialysis and transplant patients in the Torres Strait. Bronwyn has published 11 journal articles.

2017 Award, Grant and Scholarship recipients
As always, our award ceremony was a highlight of the Annual Conference. Each year, the RSA makes available a range of awards, scholarships and grants to recognise and support RSA members working to advance the care of people with kidney disease.

Graham Burnley Memorial Scholarship
The Graham Burnley Memorial Scholarship Fund, supported financially by Baxter Healthcare Pty Ltd ANZ once again in 2017, aims to foster quality care and services for individuals with kidney disease through financial support for professional activities initiated by renal health care professionals.
2017 recipient: Kelly Lambert

Birgit Munro Memorial Scholarship
The Birgit Munro Memorial Scholarship was established to honour the memory of Birgit Munro, a renal nurse who died in 1992, aged 36, after a sudden illness. The Fund was established by Birgit’s family, friends, and renal groups with which she had been associated. The fund is now administered through the Victorian Branch of the Renal Society of Australasia and by three fund trustees. At the request of the trustees, the scholarship is not being awarded in 2017 however we do expect that it will be open for entrants in 2018.

Larelle Bryce Memorial Prize
The Larelle Bryce Memorial Prize is presented each year to an RSA member for an outstanding article submitted to and published in the Communiqué. The prize was established by the RSA Board in memory of Ms Larelle Bryce, our Editorial Coordinator, who died from a chronic illness in July 2008 at 44 years of age.

International Travel Grant
Each calendar year, the RSA awards funding of up to $3,000 to three individual RSA members to support their attendance at a renal-related international conference
Recipients: Dr Leanne Brown
Jan Diareesco
Helen Hoffman
Announcing the RSA 2018 Annual Conference

The RSA 2018 Annual Conference coming to Adelaide in June 2018. Save the dates in your calendar today!

The Annual Conference theme is “Lighting the path to success.” Now is the time to start thinking about how this theme affects you and your unit, so that you can start planning your abstract.

The program will feature renowned speakers presenting on a range of topics including:

- Transforming research into health, featuring the renowned South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) and the Australian Islet Transplantation Consortium
- Supporting women’s health including pregnancy in the renal patient
- Providing renal healthcare in remote and indigenous communities
- Inspiring patient journeys, and a wide range of clinical content which impacts on the practice of all renal health professionals.

We encourage you to consider contributing to the sharing of knowledge by submitting a presentation or poster – start the conversation now within your unit. Keep an eye out for further updates and be sure to save the dates in your diary.

We look forward to welcoming you to Adelaide in June 2018.

Key Dates

- Call for Abstracts Open – Monday 13 November 2017
- Registration Open – Monday 4 December 2017
- Call for Abstracts Close – Wednesday 14 February 2018
- Author Notification & Program Publication – Thursday 29 March 2018
- Early Bird Close – Thursday 12 April 2018
- Author Acceptance Close – Thursday 12 April 2018
- Conference – Thursday 21 June to Saturday 23 June 2018
2017 Annual Conference

Our 2017 Annual Conference at the newly built International Convention Centre in Sydney was an event not to be missed! Here is just a small selection of photos. Check out our Facebook page for many more!
2017 Annual Conference Prizes

Each presentation and poster was judged by a team of content experts throughout the conference. The results were collated and the following winners were announced just prior to the closing ceremony, and were presented with case prizes:

**Best abstract $500** – Awarded to Kerry Linton. ‘Supportive care is about more than kidneys’

**Best paper – novice $500** – Awarded to Lin Tomlinson. ‘Left ventricular access devices and the challenges of intermittent haemodialysis: One unit’s experience’

**Best paper – advanced $500** – Awarded to Dr Leanne Brown (Co-Authors: Prof. Glenn Gardner & Prof. Ann Bonner). ‘A randomised controlled trial evaluating a decision support intervention for the older person with advanced kidney disease’

**Best paper – research $500** – Awarded to Dr Leanne Brown (Co-Authors: Prof. Glenn Gardner & Prof. Ann Bonner). ‘A randomised controlled trial evaluating a decision support intervention for the older person with advanced kidney disease’

**Best poster - $500** – Awarded to Kristian Indino. ‘The effect of health literacy on self-reported treatment adherence and quality of life in maintenance haemodialysis patients: a cross-sectional study’

**People’s choice award – paper $200** – Awarded to Dr Bronwyn Hayes. ‘Where did all these patients come from? An audit of admissions of haemodialysis patients from multiple satellite units to a large regional hub unit’

**People’s choice award – poster $200**. – Awarded to Marnie Budd. ‘PD buddy: using smartphone technology to improve patient care’

The **2017 RSA Conference Passport Prize** was won by Monica Edwards. Monica has won a $200 pre-paid visa card!
Conference Report
RSA Sydney Conference
19 – 21 June 2017

Glenda Rayment
Nursing Unit Manager | Renal Home Therapies Unit, South Western Sydney

The 45th annual RSA conference held in Sydney provided me with an excellent opportunity to update my clinical practice and knowledge, network with colleagues working in other health services and to evaluate the nursing practice in the unit I manage comparing to other Renal Units around Australia and New Zealand. The conference theme this year was ‘Renal care in a changing environment: Innovation and Transformation’ which stimulated interest, interaction, discussion, debate and critical thinking.

The highlight of the conference presentations for me was by A/Professor Tracie Barber, an engineer working with the vascular team and renal service at Prince of Wales Hospital. A/Professor Barber presented the work from her laboratory using fluid dynamics that has been applied to vascular access for haemodialysis. The work was an innovative and novel approach to improving vascular access for our patients and may improve vascular access survival by new surgical techniques for access creation. By improving vascular access, patients may receive better clearance during dialysis due to less recirculation and ultimately an improved quality of life. Further research is currently being conducted into microbubbles and the impact during haemodialysis and also the use of plastic cannulas in haemodialysis which will contribute to the body of evidence for clinical practice.

Dr Helen Noble, guest speaker from Ireland, also provided a thought provoking presentation on her work with the introduction of supportive care in Ireland. Dr Knoble’s future research with the ‘Prepare Me’ study will further evaluate the outcomes of people with ESRD who choose a conservative pathway rather than dialysis.

There were two presentations from the concurrent sessions which looked ‘outside the box’ for dialysis delivery in the health service. The presentation by Debbie Fortnum on the development of an assisted peritoneal dialysis program in Western Australia explored the use of a nursing agency, Silverchain, to perform peritoneal dialysis in the home for people who cannot attend to their own dialysis. This presentation discussed how the program was established and developed, how the staff of Silverchain were trained and the outcomes for the people receiving this service in the community. This program could be applied to other health services and would relieve the burden placed upon hospital based dialysis units.

The other presentation by Matthew Harvey was on the delivery of haemodialysis in a residential care centre, rather than in the traditional hospital or home setting. The hurdles encountered were discussed and how each challenge was addressed to achieve the outcome. A short film was included in the presentation of the patient talking of her dialysis journey and how happy she was to now have her dialysis in her aged care facility rather than travelling for many hours for dialysis. This demonstrated an improved quality of life and again a program that could be applied to other health services.

There were several presentations on the home dialysis network promoting home therapies, challenging myths and providing solutions to barriers. Dr Chadban presented an informative update on renal transplant and Dr Johnson presented another update on chronic kidney disease management. His discussion on whether the implementation of a chronic kidney disease registry was equivocal and attendees found it unfavourable.

The panel at the closure of the conference provided a lively ethical discussion on treatment options for patients. The case presented was realistic and one that most nurses working in renal nursing could relate to.

The Conference was a great learning opportunity and I thank the RSA for their support in my attendance. It was a good experience to have the opportunity to chair a session as well as judge.
I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to attend the Renal Society of Australasia (RSA) annual conference. This was made possible through the Renal Service and the team at Logan Hospital supporting me to attend and funding from the RSA.

The conference, like past years, was well organised by the conference committee. I am always in awe at what they achieve to coordinate an event on such a large scale. The conference this year saw 500+ national and international delegates attend a variety of workshops, presentations, poster contributions, networking opportunities and company demonstrations.

**Sunday 18/9/2017**

The pre-conference sessions were held on the Sunday prior to the conference and included, 2 vascular access workshops, a Nurse Practitioner and advanced practice symposium and the Nephrology Educators’ Network (NEN) symposium. I attend the NEN session. The first half of the day was guest speaker Jean Sheehan presenting - difficult conversations in the workplace. This session was valuable in identifying some of the difficult personality traits and the underlying foundation for these. Jean gave some suggestions on directions and language to use to get the best out of the conversation. We all had opportunity to role play the different difficult conversations, enabling us to practice the skills taught. The second half of the day was about using simulation in the renal setting, Angela Henson and Kylie Dunbar-Reid presented varying tools and techniques and showed how they can be used for clinical teaching. It was inspiring to see what other clinical units use from the simple to the complex. Our unit are already in discussions on how we can use these techniques to support staff education.

**Monday 19/6/2017**

The conference officially commenced on Monday with the welcome to country by Uncle Ray Davison, a retired health worker. Ray Davidson had a yarn with the delegates, reminding us that we all belong to mother earth and paid respects to the elders past and present to all the people present.

The first keynote speaker was Dr Helen Noble presenting ‘All that lives must die: supportive and palliative care for people with end stage kidney disease’. This was a thought provoking presentation exploring the decision making between dialysis and conservative management (supportive and palliative care). Her research has raised some ideas that need to be considered when supporting the decision making around supportive care in kidney disease. She uncovered conflicted decision-making processes along with confusion surrounding the benefits, risks and side effects of treatments for ESKD. Identifying that patients frequently change their mind over treatment options; but more concerning, clinicians often counsel patients to assist them make the decision that clinicians think would be in their best interests. I question that this is often an unconscious projection that we as clinicians make.

It was inspiring to see what other clinical units use from the simple to the complex. Our unit are already in discussions on how we can use these techniques to support staff education.
make and it reminded me the importance of being mindful of how our own thoughts and ideas may colour the information we provide to patients. A patient story was shared with the group and one quote from the patient has stayed with me: "I think I made the right decision – but whether I did or not, I don’t know." I guess that is true in all decisions.

With my background as a CNC in Renal Supportive Care (RSC), it was an absolute delight hear Dr Helen Noble (Clinical Academic and Scholarly Lead Queen’s University Belfast) speak on the importance of integrating the core concepts of palliative care, into the routine care of our patients with end-stage kidney disease. Dr Noble is one of the seminal writers on RSC from the UK. She also spoke about the importance of empowering empathy through the use of the humanities in healthcare, highlighting how a truly holistic approach to care can improve patient outcomes and experiences.

The poster presentations were wide and varied across the state. It was a shame to see such a marked reduction in the number of poster presentations compared to the conference last year. Two of the topics from the top ten posters were:

- The effect of room temperature and humidity on haemodialysis patient outcomes. This was an interesting concept that I had never considered before.
- Surgical pleurodesis for pleuroperitoneal leak: One unit’s experience. This was a comparison of case studies of 2 patients ceasing PD and transferring to HD and 2 patients successfully treated with the VATS with talc pleurodesis. So maybe this treatment option for pleuroperitoneal leak needs to be considered.

The conference dinner on the Monday night was entertaining, with good food, good company and fantastic views from the top of the cruise boat.

Renal Society of Australasia Conference 2017 Report

Alison Smyth
Renal Supportive Care Clinical Nurse Consultant
St George Hospital Kogarah

I would like to thank the RSA for funding my attendance at this year’s conference in Sydney. I also had the privilege of speaking at this conference about a topic I feel very passionately about – Shingles in the ESKD population. This talk was well received and has led to another opportunity to speak on the same topic later this year at the Renal Resources Seminar being held in Bendigo in October. During the conference I also had the opportunity to adjudicate speakers and posters and an impromptu opportunity arose to Chair a session, all a very valuable experience for me!

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The program was packed full of great topics, too many to cover in this report; however one particular talk struck a chord within me. Sarah Brown’s talk- ‘Tjukaruru Wangkantjaku- doing things the right way’ about her experiences of working in outback Kintore, providing dialysis in a culturally acceptable way for the local Aboriginal Australians with ESKD was amazing! This was a heart-warming story describing how the local Indigenous people took their health care into their own hands. They raised over $1M by auctioning their artworks with the goal of setting up a dialysis unit ‘on country’, rather than having to travel over 500km to Alice Springs for treatment, away from all they loved.
This was a success and led to the setting up of the ‘Purple House’ dialysis unit in Kintore, and more recently a mobile dialysis ‘Purple Bus’. It seems a very special breed of nurses’ work in this remote setting providing not only dialysis, but social, emotional and physical support to their clients.

Another talk of interest was by Dr Angus Ritchie (Staff Specialist Nephrologist Concord Repatriation General Hospital & A/Chief Medical Information Officer, SLHD, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital) - ‘Clinical Care Pathways: ensuring the right patients get the right care’. I felt that this talk outlined a positive step towards building a ‘bridge’ to span the gap between primary and tertiary care. Currently care between the two can be fragmented at best and the development of the ‘Health Pathways’ allows uniform information on the appropriate referral pathways and treatment options to be at health professionals fingertips. This resource needs to be promoted in order to maximize its use and to enable health professionals to be aware of the services available to their clients. Certainly this is a step in the right direction to enable cohesive and locally informed health care for our patients.

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This years’ conference was fabulous! A great venue, excellent program and top notch National and International speakers. Well done to all the organizers!
Helen’s talk was extremely interesting and thought provoking as the subject of supportive palliative care for patients within my area of work has been high on our agenda and this talk definitely highlighted some of the issues and provided some guidance in how to move forward in caring for those who have chosen not to commence renal replacement therapy. Of note were questions asked by patients who were anxious around trying to make the decision in regard to what would happen if they decided not to have RRT and also anxieties felt by staff when supporting patients around decisions made.

Session 2A: Supportive Care
I went on to listen to Kerry Linton who again discussed supportive care of patients in her presentation ‘Supportive Care is about more than kidneys’ Kerry spoke of the need to identify other aspects of care for patients other than just that of renal care, this was carried out by ensuring input from many different members of the multidisciplinary team whose roles were seen as vital in ensuring that all of the patient’s needs were identified and met utilising a collaborative approach.

Session 2B: Clinical Challenges
I moved on to listen to Jane Crossett whose presentation ‘A dialysis cruise with an air/sea rescue for a kidney transplant one nurses experience’. This was Jane’s 3rd working cruise with Dialysis Escape Line Australia (DELA) on board the Emerald Princess Cruise ship and this trip proved to be one filled with lots of drama, excitement and a great outcome for one of the passengers on board the cruise ship. Jane described how events unfolded on just day 2 of the cruise which was set to sail from Sydney visiting Tasmania and then onto Melbourne, also discussed were the benefits for patients of being able to access the services offered by DELA ensuring that patients get some respite from dialysis thanks to the service provided. Just day 2 of the cruise January 2017 the patient Kathie was on board the cruise ship with her mother who had travelled with Kathie on previous trips as Kathie despite being on dialysis for a number of years had endeavoured to maintain her lifestyle and that of her love of travel. Jane went on to describe how events unfolded and how the emergency services put a plan in place to retrieve Kathie from the cruise ship with the minimum of fuss and then how the cruise continued for the rest of the patients on board and Kathie’s successful transplant and recovery. This presentation was very inspiring from a patient perspective showing that despite the restrictions placed on patients due to their illness it is important to try and maintain what is important to you at all times. Kathie continues to do well following her transplant and her message ‘I am truly grateful’ resonated among the audience who were present.

For my last session on Day 1 I attended Session 4B: Transforming Home Haemodialysis. The Home Network team were involved throughout this session giving an overview of the work that they are involved in and shared their vision of increasing awareness of and improving access to home dialysis in Australia. This subject is high on the agenda of most staff working in renal healthcare trying to ensure that patients that wish to have access to the renal replacement therapy of their choice are provided with that option. Working in a remote environment and working with a patient population of mainly Aboriginal patients the option of being able to access the home therapy option can at times prove challenging for many reasons and to ensure that those that wish to perform their own dialysis are able to other options are being considered such as minimal care or providing those patients a support person if they are unable to nominate a suitable carer.

Session 2B: Clinical Challenges Matthew Harvey presented ‘Thinking outside the box: Home haemodialysis in a residential care facility’, Matthew’s presentation highlighted the common problem faced by many patients residing in nursing homes who if accessing patient transport can be faced with wait times following dialysis of many hours. The impact of this for many can be profound. Matthew set out how following the question ‘can she have dialysis at home’ a plan was formulated resulting in a successful outcome for this particular lady. The impact that this has had on the patient’s quality of life is undeniable and the process although at first appeared daunting for all trying to access areas such as private health care funds, recruitment of staff to enable dialysis to be performed in the nursing home, organisational support and also the question of equity this process was followed through to a successful conclusion.

Poster session review
As mentioned earlier I was also showcasing my poster ‘An Aboriginal Community Controlled Renal HealthCare Service Providing Renal Healthcare in a remote environment’ so spent some time checking out the opposition! The standard of the posters presented was high and showcased many different aspects of work being carried out throughout the country. Of particular interest to me were a number of posters including ‘Fire in the Dialysis Unit; Lessons Learnt by Deslie Henley, ‘Adjusting to other haemodialysis units following a fire: patient and staff perspectives by Stephanie Bourke and Glenn Reynolds and Alexia Mohr’s a poster entitled Evacuate! The first 2 posters outlining what happened in their dialysis units when a fire occurred and the subsequent discussions around management and the impact on patients and staff. Alexia’s poster seemed to fit well with the previous 2 posters in regard to empowering patients to take control if presented with the possibility of being involved in an evacuation whilst on dialysis.
Following the days sessions which left me with lots to ponder, I attended the conference dinner on the Captain Cook Cruise, it was good to meet up with old friends and colleagues and also good to network with many new people. The cruise itself was wonderful all on board were treated to an amazing cruise around Darling Harbour giving us plenty of photo opportunities of the famous Sydney landmarks of Luna Park, the Harbour Bridge and also the Sydney Opera House. On board we were well looked after by the crew and on the lower deck were entertained by the bar staff that were on duty on that deck.

The next 2 days of the conference were as interesting as the first and I found all of the sessions that I attended to be well presented and interesting. The large number of delegates at the conference was encouraging to see and to hear that the membership of the Renal Society is at an all-time high shows testament to the hard work and commitment shown by all those involved in providing the resources for members through the society.

I would like to thank the RSA for providing me with the opportunity to attend this year’s conference as I have once again been able to extend my knowledge and understanding.

Supportive Care is about more than kidneys

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