

[Report for 2009](#)

2009 ANZACPE President's Report.

The theme of this year's conference, "How to Survive in Drought – Waters of revival" is an apt theme for our time. During these past twelve months many of us have been significantly affected both personally and professionally by the global economic crisis. We have been forced to find ways in which we can function with far less. Droughts appear not only in the form of a lack of water, which is a significant and an essential resource, but they also come in the forms of; inadequate or reduced funding, fewer resources, a lack of suitably trained people, a lack of organizational support, lack of applicants or the kinds of applicants we want. And so this list goes on.

In drought times we experience the harsher realities of life. In the early stage we can and often do spend time bemoaning or lamenting what has occurred. We grieve the loss of the more abundant times. Eventually though in order to survive, we are challenged to find new ways of doing things, to adapt to our times, to be far more creative, to find new ways, to expand our vision, to see and do things differently, to explore and experiment with possibilities that would not have had a chance in the good times.

Creative farmers realize this when they are faced by drought. They realize that they must adapt their farming methods, they must explore and experiment with new crops or live stock. The Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area where I grew up is a great example of people's creative ingenuity. The early settlers recognized that the soil was good. But with insufficient water it was useless. The crazy idea they had was to divert the water from the rivers flowing eastward to the sea, and have them flow west. The Snowy Mountains scheme is a testament to this willingness to take a risk and a "can do" attitude. In more recent years the dam levels have continued to fall and so the farmers in the MIA have had to re think their farming practices. They have been forced to find ways to be far more efficient with the water that they do receive. So it is the same for us. We have been challenged by the circumstances in which we find ourselves and I believe are in the process of responding, and responding creatively.

Throughout this past year a small group of ANZACPE Supervisors have worked with ACPEWA's Executive to explore ways of fostering the development of CPE in WA and in particular the continuation of the CPE Centre at Royal Perth Hospital. Through this process ACPEWA's Executive have gained clarity about what they want and we look forward to seeing and supporting them as they endeavor to find creative ways of addressing their situation. In the meantime, we are grateful to David Larsen who conducted a Basic full-time program over the summer and for his willingness to return to Royal Perth to conduct a Spring Unit this year. Michelle Benjamin, Acting Administrator for the CPE at Royal Perth Hospital has sent a flyer inviting Level 2 and Level 3 Supervisors to conduct a Summer Unit, commencing in December at Royal Perth Hospital. If you are interested please see me, so that I can assist you with Michelle's contact details. The conducting of individual units is a significant and important response to the immediate situation.

Like Royal Perth we are all challenged in one way or another to adapt and be creative in the way in which we respond to our own experiences of drought. At this conference we have an opportunity to

learn of the different kinds of droughts being experienced by colleagues. To hear how they have sought to respond, what has worked and what hasn't. I believe that through this kind of sharing, new ideas are often borne, so I encourage you to engage with one another during the conference to share your experiences and ideas, even the ones that seem a little crazy.

Despite the drought there is growing interest in chaplaincy and pastoral care. There are new players in the market, offering Certificate IV's in Chaplaincy and pastoral care. Whilst at some level they are setting up in opposition to us. I'm also aware that they may be providing us with a new opportunity. The Australian Health and Welfare Chaplains are re-envisioning themselves to form Spiritual Care Australia, this is an exciting time. Considerable work has been done by The Health Care Council of Victoria in articulating competencies in Chaplaincy. The training and credentialing of chaplains is of increasing interest and so is the desire and expectation that chaplains be engaged in on-going supervision. Where are we positioning ourselves? We have great expertise in training people for supervision. How are we planning to meet this market opportunity?

We have a marvelous product, both in our pastoral education of chaplains and pastoral supervisors. Students who undertake CPE are encouraged to become reflective practitioners, listening attentively and responding to the uniqueness of the person and their situation. How are we as an organization enacting the same principle? Whilst holding on to that which is core to who and what we are, how can we continue to deliver our product in more creative and responsive ways that meet our clients' needs?

My hope is that this conference would ignite our passion for the work we do and provide us with a venue to encourage innovation. It is possible that in experimenting with new ways that we will have failures along the way, but I hope that we will see these as opportunities to do further work, to refine our response. I'm sure that the diverting of waters from the east flowing rivers to the west seemed like a ludicrous idea. In building the Snowy Mountains scheme I imagine there were many hurdles that needed to be overcome. The challenge for us is to see drought as an opportune time, in drought we can no longer continue to do things as we have done in the past. Freed from the frantic activity of what we've always done we have time to reflect, to be creative, to find new ways of responding. What are the opportunities await us?

Jenny Washington